Plain Sermons

Rev. R. D. Browne

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PLAIN SERMONS

ON THE

FUNDAMENTAL TRUTHS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

WITHDRAWN

BY THE

REV. R. D. BROWNE

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

The present collection of sermons was first given to the public in 1890. As the first edition is exhausted, and the book is still in demand, the author has decided to prepare a fresh one, and has taken this opportunity of making a few changes and corrections. In the sermon on the Seventh Commandment, the author has availed himself of certain suggestions made by a writer in the *Month*, who kindly reviewed his book, and has added a few short notes explanatory of English law on the subject treated in the sermon. Also, in deference to a wish expressed by some other Catholic critics, the Scripture texts throughout this volume are now given in the version usually known as the Douay Bible. Other corrections of less moment having been made at the suggestion of the Rev. Father Kent, of the Oblates of St. Charles, the Censor Deputatus of the first edition, the author ventures to hope that his book will be more acceptable to his Catholic readers on both sides of the Atlantic, who have already given such a kindly welcome to the earlier edition.

Two sermons—one on the Passion of our Lord, and

one on Our Blessed Lady—have been added to the present edition. The Very Rev. Canon Gildea, D.D., the present Censor Deputatus, has kindly approved of them.

In conclusion, the author is happy to avail himself of this opportunity of thanking the Rev. Father Kent for the great pains he has taken to render the second edition of this book worthy of the public.

R. D. B.

Ashford, Middlesex,
November 22, 1900.

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PLAIN SERMONS.

I.

ON THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES.

"In the beginning God created heaven and earth."—GEN. i. 1.

GOD is a pure spirit. God has no body. Holy Scripture speaks of the eyes, arms, and hands of God. These words should be taken in a figurative sense, and mean the wisdom and power of the Almighty. God cannot be composed of parts; for a being that is composed of parts is changeable and imperfect. God is eternal; for He never had a beginning, nor will He have an end. God is self-existent; a necessary being, Who exists of Himself. "They shall perish," says the Prophet; "but Thou remainest; and all of them shall grow old, like a garment: and as a vesture Thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed. But Thou art always the self-same, and Thy years shall not fail" (Ps. ci. 27, 28). God is immensity itself, being everywhere, and filling all things with His mighty presence. "If I

ascend into heaven," says the royal prophet, "Thou art there; if I descend into hell, Thou art present. If I take my wings early in the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there also shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me" (Ps. cxxxviii. 8-10). "He is higher than heaven, and what wilt thou do? He is deeper than hell, and how wilt thou know? The measure of Him is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea" (Job xi. 8, 9). "In Him we live, and move, and are" (Acts xvii. 28). God is omnipotent. With God all things are possible, and nothing can resist His will. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and all things out of nothing by His only word. "Be light made, and light was made" (Gen. i. 3). "He spoke, and they were made; He commanded, and they were created" (Ps. cxlviii. 5). "In Him were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominations, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and in Him" (Col. i. 16). God is unchangeable. "I am the Lord, and I change not" (Mal. iii. 6). "Every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with Whom there is no change, nor shadow of alteration" (St. James i. 17). Alteration means passing from one state to another, and this cannot take place in God, Who cannot cease to be what He is, or become what He is not. Infinitely perfect, He cannot suffer change or alteration in His essence or in His

divine attributes. He is, was, and ever will be the immutable God. God is infinitely wise. He knows all things past, present, and to come, and even the most secret thoughts of men. "The eyes of the Lord are far brighter than the sun, beholding round about all the ways of men, and the bottom of the deep, and looking into the hearts of men, into the most hidden parts. For all things were known to the Lord God, before they were created; so also after they were perfected, He beholdeth all things" (Ecclus. xxiii. 28, 29). This wisdom is not incompatible with our liberty. We act with full liberty, and though all our actions are known to God, we remain, nevertheless, perfectly free and responsible for everything that we do.

Imagine God seated upon a mountain, and all nations of every age passing before Him, some in the narrow path, and others in the broad way that leadeth to destruction. Seated on His lofty throne, the Almighty can see the end of every being, and the precipice towards which some unfortunate sinners are rapidly walking. The past, future—everything is present before Him, and this knowledge does not in the least destroy that liberty with which His creatures are endowed, and which renders them answerable in His eyes for everything they do. We know that nothing is hid from the eyes of God; we feel ourselves that we are free; and that we cannot thoroughly reconcile these two truths is only a proof of the weakness of the human mind. God is

full of mercy. He is full of compassion for the miseries of His creatures. "He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance" (2 Pet. iii. 9). "I will not," says the Lord, "the death of the sinner, but that he should turn and live. As a father hath compassion on his children, so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear Him, for He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust. . . . But the mercy of the Lord is from eternity and unto eternity upon them that fear Him" (Ps. cii. 13, 14, 17).

AMEN.

II.

ON THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

"For the beginning of fornication is the devising of idols, and the invention of them is the corruption of life."—WISD. xiv. 12.

A REVELATION was necessary in order that man should know the end for which he had been created. "Eye hath not seen," says Isaias (lxiv. 4), "what things Thou hast prepared for them that wait for Thee." The end for which God created man being supernatural, man could not know it unless enlightened by God Himself. True, the works of Nature proclaim the glory of God, and the heavens never cease to acknowledge His omnipotence. But man, as the Apostle tells us in his Epistle to the Romans, had fallen so low, had been so degraded by sin as to forget his God, and adore instead the works of his own hands; he had ceased to know God, his Creator, had fallen into idolatry, and needed a Divine Teacher to enlighten him, not only on the supernatural truths, that man could not know by his own intellectual powers, but on all those truths, and especially the existence of God, which man would have acquired had he not been corrupted by sin. The idea of the existence of God is implanted in the hearts of all men. We see God in His creatures, and rise

gradually, step by step, from the contemplation of the wonderful works of Nature to the existence of God, the Creator of the universe. It is impossible for us not to be penetrated with the divine presence, and man would not have been taxed with folly by Holy Writ for having denied the existence of God, were he at all justified in so doing. The evidence in favour of this fundamental truth is so great that no man can shut his eyes to it. Depravity may eradicate it from our bosoms, but will not excuse us before God and man. "All men are vain," says Solomon, "in whom there is not the knowledge of God, and who by these good things that are seen could not understand Him that is, neither by attending to the works have acknowledged Who was the workman, but have imagined either the fire, or the wind, or the swift air, or the circle of the stars, or the great water, or the sun and moon, to be the gods that rule the world. With whose beauty if they being delighted took them to be gods: let them know how much the Lord of them is more beautiful than they, for the first Author of beauty made all those things; or, if they admired their power and their effects, let them understand by them that He that made them is mightier than they. For by the greatness of the beauty, and of the creature, the Creator of them may be seen, so as to be known thereby. . . . But then, again, they are not to be pardoned, for if they were able to know so much as to make a judgment of the world, how did they not more easily

find out the Lord thereof?" (Wisd. xiii. 1-9). In the Epistle to the Romans (i. 18-20) the Apostle unfolds this doctrine in these words: "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and injustice of those men, that detain the truth of God in injustice, because that which is known of God is manifest in them. For God hath manifested it unto them. For the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; His eternal power also and divinity, so that they are inexcusable." The Apostle explains how the depravity of man gave rise to infidelity, idolatry and atheism.

"Because that, when they knew God, they have not glorified Him as God, or given thanks; but became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened. For professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. And they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of a corruptible man, and of birds, and of four-footed beasts, and of creeping things. Wherefore God gave them up to the desires of their heart, unto uncleanness, to dishonour their own bodies among themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie; and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, Who is blessed for ever" (Rom. i. 21-25).

I will conclude with a few words from the Book of Wisdom, in which this doctrine is expressed in such a manner as to leave upon us a lasting impression. "For the beginning of fornication is the devising of

idols; and the invention of them is the corruption of life. . . . For a father, being afflicted with bitter grief, made to himself the image of his son, who was quickly taken away, and him who then had died as a man he began now to worship as a god, and appointed him rites and sacrifices among his servants. . . . And made an express image of the king whom they had a mind to honour. And the multitude of men, carried away by the beauty of the work, took him now for a god that a little before was but honoured as a man" (Wisd. xiv. 12-20). "Or if a carpenter hath cut down a tree proper for his use in the wood, and skilfully taken off all the bark thereof, and with his art diligently formeth a vessel profitable for the common uses of life, and useth the chips of his work to dress his meat: and taking what was left thereof, which is good for nothing, being a crooked piece of wood, and full of knots, carveth it diligently, when he hath nothing else to do, and by the skill of his art fashioneth it and maketh it like the image of a man, or the resemblance of some beast, laying it over with vermilion, and painting it red, and covering every spot that is in it; and maketh a convenient dwelling-place for it, and setting it in a wall, and fastening it with iron; . . . and then maketh prayer to it, inquiring concerning his substance, and his children or his marriage. And he is not ashamed to speak to that which hath no life, and for health he maketh supplication to the weak, and for life prayeth to that which is dead, and for

help calleth upon that which is unprofitable. And for a good journey he petitioneth him that cannot walk, and for getting, and for working, and for the event of all things he asketh him that is unable to do anything" (Wisd. xiii. 11-19).

AMEN.

III.

ON THE INFINITE PERFECTIONS AND PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

"For there is no other God but Thou, Who hast care of all, that Thou shouldst shew that Thou dost not give judgment unjustly."—WISD. xii. 13.

GOD is infinite in all His perfections. "Great is the Lord, and of His greatness there is no end" (Ps. cxliv. 3). He is an unfathomable Ocean. Were God finite in His attributes He would not be God, that Being than whom nothing more perfect can be conceived: "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God" (Rom. xi. 33); "He seeth from eternity to eternity, and there is nothing wonderful before Him" (Ecclus. xxxix. 25). God knows all things, even our most secret thoughts. This knowledge is a perfection that the Supreme Being cannot dispense with. This attribute is identical with the divine essence itself. "Nosse et esse," says St. Augustine, "illi unum est." To know and to be is the same with Him. The divine knowledge is unchangeable; it cannot increase or decrease, being one and the same thing with His divine essence. The Supreme Being, Who is infinitely perfect, cannot

acquire knowledge, nor can things become invisible in His sight. He must be endowed with the infinite knowledge that penetrates all things, and is incapable of change or alteration. Finite knowledge is necessarily changeable, denotes a finite being, and is incompatible with the notion that we have of the Godhead. "How great are Thy works, O Lord! Thou hast made all things in wisdom" (Ps. ciii. 24). For "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. So the things also that are of God no man knoweth, but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. ii. 10, 11). God has a perfect knowledge of Himself and of His divine attributes. He knows all things that are possible. "He calleth those things that are not, as those that are" (Rom. iv. 17).

God's wisdom, like His omnipotence, must reach everything imaginable. "Neither is there any creature invisible in His sight, but all things are naked and open to His eyes, to Whom our speech is" (Heb. iv. 13). "Thou hast understood my thoughts afar off, my path and my line Thou hast searched out" (Ps. cxxxviii. 3). "From the place of His habitation He looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth, He fashioneth their hearts alike." All things past, and present, and to come are known to God. "The eyes of the Lord are far brighter than the sun, beholding round about all the ways of men, and the bottom of the deep, and looking into the hearts of men, into the most hidden parts; for all things were known to the Lord God before they were created. So also

after they were perfected He beholdeth all things" (Ecclus. xxiii. 28, 29). This knowledge that God possesses does not destroy our liberty. God foresees things necessary as necessary, and contingent as contingent. "As the memory," says St. Augustine, "that recalls the past does not in the least change its nature, so the foreknowledge of God does not influence the things that are to be"—"Memoria tua non cogis facta esse, quae praeterierunt, sic Deus praescientia sua non cogit facienda quae futura sunt." Because you foresaw that a man would fall over a precipice, it does not follow that your vision or foresight communicated to him an impulse he could not resist. His liberty was not in the least affected by your knowledge. God wishes all men to be saved. The Creed tells us that Christ died for our salvation, and as we are all obliged to recite this Creed, and to believe every article as gospel truth, we must believe that Christ died for each one of us. And Christ came down from heaven to do the will of His Heavenly Father. God wishes us, therefore, to be saved, and He gave His only-begotten Son that whosoever believed in Him should not perish, but should have life everlasting. Pope Alexander condemned the teaching of Jansenius, who maintained that it was wrong to say that God wished to save any besides those whom he had predestinated to everlasting bliss. "I desire," says St. Paul, in his Epistle to Timothy, "therefore, first of all that supplications be made for all men, . . . for this is good and acceptable

in the sight of God our Saviour, Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself a redemption for all, a testimony in due times" (1 Tim. ii. 1-6). God wishes the salvation of all men, for the Apostle exhorts Timothy to pray for all men, because God wishes them to be saved. Again, the Apostle tells us that there is one Mediator, the Lord Jesus, Who gave Himself a ransom for all. "If one died for all, then were all dead. And Christ died for all, that they also who live, may not now live to themselves, but unto Him Who died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. v. 14, 15). It is, therefore, certain that Christ died for all men, and that God sincerely wishes the salvation of each one of us.

The providence of God embraces two things: His divine intellect, which decrees the end for which all things were created; and His will, which executes in due time the decrees of heaven. His providence extends to all creatures. "Behold the birds of the air," says the Lord, "for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns, and your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they? . . . And for raiment why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they labour not, neither do they spin. But I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. And if the grass of the field, which is to-day, and to-morrow is cast into the oven,

how much more God doth so clothe you, O ye of little faith?" (St. Matt. vi. 26-30). It is of faith that our election to divine grace is purely gratuitous. God has chosen us to be members of His Church from pure love and without any merit on our part. It is also of faith that everlasting bliss will be granted to the elect as a reward of their good works. "We know that to them that love God, all things work together unto good to such as, according to His purpose, are called to be saints. For whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. And whom He predestinated, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified" (Rom. viii. 28, 29). Those whom God has chosen are certainly saved, and those whom He has rejected are sure to perish. "Jesus answered them, I told ye and ye believed not, the works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them and they follow Me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. That which My Father hath given Me is greater than all: and no one is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand" (St. John x. 25-29). All those, therefore, whom God has chosen will be saved, but no one will be condemned unless through his own fault. Calvin would have us believe that

God decreed the perdition of innumerable souls, having created them for the purpose of torturing them during endless ages in the flames of hell. This doctrine Holy Church has condemned. She teaches that God wishes all men to be saved, and condemns only the reprobate, those unfortunate men who die in their sins. "Is it My will that a sinner should die, saith the Lord God, and not that he should be converted from his ways and live?" (Ezech. xviii. 23). At the last day Christ will condemn only those who have neglected to do good. "Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you gave Me not to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me not to drink" (St. Matt. xxv. 41, 42). This doctrine, namely, that God condemns only the wicked, is founded on Scripture. It is the teaching of the Universal Church, and the Fathers are unanimous in maintaining it. It will suffice to give one citation from St. Augustine. "God is good," says St. Augustine, "and just, and being good, He can deliver some without any merit on their part; but being at the same time just, He can condemn no one who is innocent"—"Bonus est Deus, justus est Deus, potest aliquos sine bonis meritis liberare, quia bonus est; non potest quempiam sine malis meritis damnare quia justus est."

AMEN.

IV.

ON THE MYSTERY OF THE BLESSED TRINITY.

"Going, therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."—St. Matt. xxviii. 19.

In God, beloved brethren, there are three Divine Persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost—and these three Divine Persons are all one and the same God. It is of faith that there are three Persons in God, Holy Church having always maintained this doctrine and condemned all heretics who presumed to deny it. This mystery is referred to occasionally in the Old Testament. It is alluded to in the Book of Genesis in the following terms: "And He said, Let us make man to Our image and likeness" (Gen. i. 26). Here the plural number, according to Tertullian, indicates plurality of persons, the words, "God said," expressing the unity of the Godhead. It is, however, in the New Testament that this mystery is unfolded in language clear and definite, that can bear but one meaning: "And Jesus, being baptized," says St. Matthew, "forthwith came out of the water, and lo, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove

and coming upon Him, and behold, a voice from heaven saying: This is My Beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased" (St. Matt. iii. 16, 17). In this passage mention is made of the three Divine Persons —of the Father, declaring Jesus to be His Divine Son; of the Son, Who was baptized; and of the Holy Ghost descending upon the Son under the form of a dove. The words of the fifth chapter of the first Epistle of St. John are known to all: "For," says the Apostle, "there are three who give testimony in heaven—the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost—and these three are one" (1 St. John v. 7). In this passage the unity of the Godhead, together with the plurality of persons, is clearly expressed. I am aware that Protestants have eliminated this text from the revised edition of the Bible on the ground that it is not to be found in the Greek and other versions of the fourth century of the Church. This reason does not in the least justify them; for these words are contained in the oldest version of the Bible that we possess—in that of the African Church—which, being in use years before Tertullian wrote, must have existed from the very beginning of Christianity. As the African Church received the Gospel from Rome, we may presume that the original text used by the See of Peter contained this passage, and that the more recent versions of the New Testament which have served as a pretext unto Protestants for expunging these words, have been altered by Arius and other heretics. However, in the Gospel of St. John there

are several passages that express in plain words this adorable mystery. "But when the Paraclete cometh, Whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, Who proceedeth from the Father, He shall give testimony of Me" (St. John xv. 26); and again, "The Paraclete, Whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things" (St. John xiv. 26). The Son promises to send the Holy Ghost, Who, as the Son declares, doth proceed from the Father and the Son, being sent by both. These three Persons are distinct one from another. The Father is distinct from the Son, being the first Person and unbegotten; the Son is born of the Father from all eternity; and the Holy Ghost, the third Person of the Adorable Trinity, proceeds from the Father and the Son. The Father is God; "I am the Lord thy God, Who brought thee out of the land of Egypt; thou shalt not have other gods before Me . . . thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them" (Exod. xx. 2-5). The Son is God; "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Phil. ii. 6). The Holy Ghost is God. We read in the Acts of the Apostles that Peter reproved Ananias for having lied to the Holy Ghost: "Thou hast not lied to men," says the Apostle, "but to God" (Acts v. 4). The three Persons of the Blessed Trinity are all one and the same God, for they have all one and the very same divine nature; for, as we have read in the Athanasian Creed, "the divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is one, the glory equal, the majesty eternal.

Uncreated is the Father, uncreated the Son, and uncreated the Holy Ghost; immense is the Father, immense the Son, immense the Holy Ghost. The Father is eternal, the Son is eternal, the Holy Ghost is eternal. Likewise omnipotent is the Father, omnipotent the Son, omnipotent the Holy Ghost. The Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Ghost is God — all three being one God. The Father is uncreated and unbegotten; the Son is of the Father alone, not made, not created, but begotten; the Holy Ghost is from the Father and the Son, not made, not created, not begotten, but proceeding."

The Fathers of the Church are all unanimous in teaching this doctrine. St. Ignatius, a Father of the first and second centuries, expresses himself in these terms: "Be careful," says that holy martyr in one of his letters to the faithful of Antioch, "to be well grounded in the doctrine of our Lord and the Apostles, so that you may be successful in all your undertakings, both spiritual and temporal, by faith and charity, in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." St. Polycarp, who suffered martyrdom about the year 166, made the following profession of faith: "I praise Thee, O my God, I bless Thee, I glorify Thee through the Eternal Pontiff, Thy only begotten Son, through Whom glory be unto Thee, and to the Son, together with the Holy Ghost, during endless ages." Those were the last words the Saint uttered before shedding his blood for Christ. St. Justin, who died towards the end of the

second century, declares that in all the offerings we make to God we give thanks to the Creator for all things through His Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost. The words of St. Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, in the second century, are well worth quoting. "The Church," says that illustrious bishop, "which is spread throughout the whole world, has received from the Apostles and their disciples the doctrine of one God, the Father, Who is omnipotent, the Creator of heaven and earth; and of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Who was made Man for our salvation; and of the Holy Ghost, Who predicted by the prophets everything concerning the coming of the Son of God." Tertullian, who wrote towards the end of the second century, is equally explicit. "We believe," says that renowned doctor of the African Church, "in one God, in the Son of God, His Word Who was born of Him, by Whom all things were made, and without Whom nothing has been made. We believe that the Word was sent by the Father into the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and that He was born of her, Man and God, the Son of man and the Son of God, and called Jesus Christ; that, according to Scripture, He was crucified, dead, and buried; that He rose through the Father, ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father, whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead; that, according to promise, He sent from the Father the Holy Ghost."

The Fathers of the third century teach the same

doctrine. To prove this mystery, St. Cyprian had recourse to the words of St. Matthew: "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The Church having condemned in the fourth century, at the Councils of Nice and Constantinople, the errors of Arius and Macedonius, who had denied, the one the divinity of the Word, the other that of the Holy Ghost, all Fathers whose writings are posterior to those celebrated Councils have professed in unmistakable language, as the Socinians themselves confess, their faith in the most adorable mystery of the Blessed Trinity. We are, therefore, able to say, without fear of contradiction, that this doctrine has been the doctrine of the Church in all ages, and has been handed down to us from the most remote period—from the Apostolic times themselves. Besides, the Apostles' Creed, the Creed of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus (the miracle worker), and the creeds and doxologies of the primitive ages witness to the truth of this assertion; so that we may be justified in concluding in these words of St. Augustine: "All writers," says that illustrious doctor of the Church, "both ancient and modern, that I have read, and who have written before me on the adorable mystery of the Blessed Trinity, were anxious to teach that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, being of the same substance, form one Godhead by their inseparable equality. Therefore, these three Persons are not three Gods, but one God, though the Father Who begot the Son be distinct from the

Son, and though the Son Who is born of the Father be distinct from the Father, and though the Holy Ghost be neither the Father nor the Son, but the Spirit of the Father and the Son, being equal to the Father and the Son. This," says the Saint, "is my faith, for it is the faith of the Catholic Church."

AMEN.

V.

ON THE CREATION.

"In the beginning God created heaven and earth."—GEN. i. 1.

THAT God created the world out of nothing by His word is a revealed truth that no Christian can deny. "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth": these words of the Apostles' Creed are sufficient for all Catholics. We all believe that there was a time when this world did not exist, and that it received not only its form, but its very being, from the hands of the Almighty. The teaching of the Church is not only founded upon Holy Scripture and tradition, but upon reason itself. Everything that we see in this world is subject to change and alteration, and must depend for its existence on One who is immutable, upon God the Creator of the Universe. We read in the book of Genesis that God created the world in six days. "And God said, Be light made, and light was made. And God saw the light that it was good; and He divided the light from the darkness; and He called the light Day, and the darkness Night; and there was evening and morning one day. And God made a firmament, and divided the waters that were under the firmament from those

that were above the firmament. And the evening and morning were the second day. God also said, Let the waters that are under the heaven be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear, and it was so done. And He said, Let the earth bring forth green herb and fruit-tree yielding fruit. And the earth brought forth the green herb and the tree that beareth fruit, and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day. And God made two great lights, a greater light to rule the day, and a lesser light to rule the night: and the stars. And He set them in the firmament of heaven to shine upon the earth. One to rule the day, one the night, one to divide the light and the darkness. And God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day. God also said, Let the waters bring forth the creeping creature having life, and the fowl that may fly over the earth and under the firmament of heaven. And God created the great whales, and every living and moving creature, which the waters brought forth, according to their kinds, and every winged fowl according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And He blessed them, saying, Increase and multiply, and fill the waters of the sea, and let the birds be multiplied upon the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day. And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature in its kind, cattle and creeping things, and beasts of the earth, according to its kind. And it was so done. And God made the beasts of the earth

according to their kinds, and cattle, and everything that creepeth on the earth after its kind. And God saw that it was good. And He said, Let Us make man to Our image and likeness; and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth, and every creeping creature that moveth upon the earth. And God created man to His own image, to the image of God He created him, male and female He created them" (Gen. i. 3-27).

The days of Genesis may mean indefinite periods, so that it may have taken thousands, and hundreds of thousands of years, to give the world its actual shape. And innumerable ages may have elapsed before the earth had become a fit abode for mortal man. And if we put this construction on the words of Genesis, which is that of St. Augustine, we shall be able to refute the errors of those men who are opposed to Holy Church, and who pretend that her teaching cannot be reconciled with the discoveries of modern science. Had Moses not been inspired he could never have written the Book of Genesis, and left us the most eloquent description that was ever penned of the creation of the world. Eminent men are astonished at his wisdom, and at the insight that he possessed into the mysteries of nature—insight that enabled the man of God, thousands of years ago, to anticipate the most recent scientific discoveries. According to Moses, six thousand years have elapsed since God created the first man, and this account seems to

be admitted at the present day by the most illustrious writers. Some nations are, of course, anxious to pass off as more ancient, and pretend to have existed, not six thousand, but tens of thousands of years. Their claims to such antiquity have been, however, rejected, and their genealogies declared to be a tissue of falsehoods. Lucretius himself laughed at their folly. "If they be," says the Roman poet, "so ancient, how is it that their illustrious men have left no traces of their existence, and that the Trojan heroes are the only ones of whose exploits we have as yet heard?"

The fossil remains of vegetables and of animals, that are to be found in the different strata of the earth, attest the veracity of the inspired writer. Moses tells us that God created the earth, and the earth brought forth herbs and plants; that He created the fishes, the birds, the animals that move upon the earth, and finally man. And this order of the creation of things is in conformity with the teaching of geology. We first meet with the fossils, the crystallized remains of vegetables, of fishes, and animals, and the traces of man are only to be found in the most recent strata of the globe. It is certain, beloved brethren, that God Himself created man, having formed his body out of the slime of the earth, and animated it with the spirit of life. And God said, "Let Us make man to Our image and likeness" (Gen. i. 26). "And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life. And man became a living soul"

(Gen. ii. 7). "Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam, and when he was fast asleep He took one of his ribs and filled up flesh for it, and the Lord God built the rib which he took from Adam into a woman: and brought her to Adam. And Adam said: This now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man" (Gen. ii. 21-23). Our first parents were therefore created by God Himself, His divine hands having moulded their bodies, which He afterwards animated with the breath of life. This is the teaching of the Church and of all the Fathers. They are all unanimous in proclaiming this doctrine. Even the heathen themselves seem to have received it from the most remote ages. It is also certain that all men have descended from Adam. "And Adam called the name of his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all the living" (Gen. iii. 20). This doctrine the Apostle St. Paul announces to the Athenians. "And God hath made of one, says the Apostle, all mankind, to dwell upon the whole face of the earth" (Acts xvii. 26). Holy Church, moreover, has always professed this doctrine, teaching everywhere that we are all the descendants of Adam, and that in him we have all sinned; and all nations, as their annals attest, declare that they have all descended from a common source. It is undeniable that all the languages of the globe must have had one and the same beginning. True, some nations have fallen into an utter state of degradation, and have so degenerated that it can scarcely

be believed that they are of our race. They differ from us in colour, in shape, and especially in their mental faculties. Still, this can be easily explained, for these differences are not essential ones, and may be attributed to climate and other circumstances, their mental and moral deterioration having risen especially from their having lost the knowledge of the one true and living God. "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, Who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God delivered them up to shameful affections" (Rom. i. 25, 26). Men and women of all nations associate with one another and multiply, and were they of different species this, as we know from experience, would be a thing impossible.

To conclude, beloved brethren, let us impress these important truths upon our minds, let us always abide by the decisions of Holy Church, so that we may not be tossed about by every wind of doctrine.

AMEN.

VI.

ON OUR GUARDIAN ANGELS.

"There shall no evil come to thee, for He hath given His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways."—Ps. xc. 10, 11.

The angels are pure spirits. They surround the throne of God and never cease to praise Him, crying out incessantly, "Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts." Some theologians and holy Fathers maintained that the angels were endowed with bodies, ethereal bodies it is true, and so refined that they partook of the nature of the spirit to which they were united.

This doctrine has been, however, rejected, and Holy Church teaches that those angelic beings who minister unto the Lord in Paradise are not clothed with bodies, but are pure spirits. Holy Church teaches also that the holy angels were, if not created in, raised immediately after creation to a supernatural state, and endowed with sanctifying grace and all those supernatural gifts that enabled them to render themselves worthy of that bliss, that beatific vision for which they had been created. Some persevered in the grace of God and received their reward, the beatific vision, that vision that beatifies the elect; others rebelled against their Lord and were con-

demned to everlasting perdition. The sin of the fallen angels was pride. Lucifer with his rebel hosts refused to acknowledge the omnipotence of God, and, as some theologians would have us believe, he trusted so much to his own powers as to imagine himself equal to the Omnipotent. St. Alphonsus and other writers maintain that the mystery of the Incarnation, having been revealed in heaven, Lucifer and his proud followers would not bow down and adore a God Incarnate. Condign punishment was immediately inflicted upon them; they were at once deprived of sanctifying grace and all those supernatural gifts that God in His mercy had conferred upon them, and were banished for ever from His sight, and condemned to undergo everlasting punishment in the flames of hell.

We all have a guardian angel, and mention is frequently made in Scripture of those angels whom God sent to minister unto the wants of men. Three angels visited Abraham and announced the ruin of Sodom and Gomorrah, and when the holy patriarch, in obedience to the will of God, was about to offer his son as a sacrifice, the angel of the Lord stopped his arm and told him that God was satisfied. Jacob was also frequently visited by angels. We have all read of that wonderful dream, in which he saw a ladder set up on the earth and reaching the heavens, and angels ascending and descending thereon. Upon another occasion he wrestled the whole night with an angel, who blessed him and gave him another name,

that of Israel, to indicate that the holy man had power with God and had prevailed. An angel of the Lord accompanied the Hebrews on their way out of Egypt, as a pillar of cloud by day and as a pillar of fire by night. In the New Testament, the angels are often referred to. Our Lord begs of us not to scandalize the least of His little ones, for their angels see the face of His Heavenly Father. Our guardian angels pray for us and protect us against a thousand dangers. They offer up our prayers to God and intercede on our behalf. We should therefore honour them as the faithful friends of God, and never cease to invoke their protection. We should place in their protection the greatest confidence possible, and treat them with the greatest respect, never forgetting ourselves in their presence, or doing anything that could give them offence.

Why should we not honour them? They are the most perfect of creatures; they are the ambassadors of God, and the homage we pay them redounds to the honour of God, Who created them and Who is the Author of the perfections that we admire in these angelic beings. We should frequently address our supplications to our good angels, and especially when tempted by the powers of hell. The devil goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. He never ceases to tempt us, and sometimes he even takes possession of unfortunate sinners. St. Luke relates how our Lord cast a legion of devils out of a man into a herd of swine. "And they sailed to

the country of the Gerasens, which is over against Galilee. And when he was come forth to the land, there met him a certain man who had a devil now a very long time, and he wore no clothes, neither did he abide in a house, but in the sepulchres. And when he saw Jesus, he fell down before Him, and crying out with a loud voice he said, What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beseech Thee, do not torment me. For He commanded the unclean spirit to go out of the man; for many times it seized him, and he was bound with chains and kept in fetters, and breaking the bonds he was driven by the devil into the deserts. And Jesus asked him saying, What is thy name? But he said, Legion, because many devils were entered into him. And they besought Him that He would not command them to go into the abyss. And there was there a herd of many swine feeding on the mountain. And they besought Him that He would suffer them to enter into them. And He suffered them. The devils therefore went out of the man, and entered into the swine. And the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake and were stifled. . . . And all the multitude of the country of the Gerasens besought Him to depart from them, for they were taken with great fear, and He going up into the ship, returned back again" (St. Luke viii. 26-37).

On another occasion our Lord told His Apostles that it was by prayer that those evil spirits were cast out. Let us, therefore, beloved brethren, pray to

God to protect us; let us address ourselves to our guardian angels, and, depend upon it, we also shall cast out these evil spirits and drive them back to those regions of darkness, where they are doomed to live for ever a life of wretchedness and unutterable woe.

AMEN.

VII.

ON ORIGINAL SIN.

"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth."—EPH. iv. 23, 24.

BELOVED brethren, our first parents were created, or placed immediately after creation, in a supernatural state. And God said, "Let Us make man in Our image and likeness" (Gen. i. 26). "My soul is like to God," as our Catechism says, "because it is a spirit and is immortal. And, as in God there are three Divine Persons, so in my soul there are three distinct faculties — my understanding, my memory, and my will." Again, man is the image of God, inasmuch as he is the lord of the universe. All creatures obey him, and are ever ready to acknowledge his supreme dominion. But a soul in a state of grace is in a special manner the image of God. The grace of God ennobles the soul, and enables it to live so as to be worthy of that celestial glory, of that heavenly light, by means of which it will one day partake of the divinity itself! "We know," says St. John, "that when He shall appear, we shall be like to Him, because we shall see Him as He is" (1 St. John

iii. 2). This grace, God conferred upon our first parents, having created them for a supernatural end, for the beatific vision. Not only did God confer upon them sanctifying grace, but He also bestowed upon them other invaluable gifts and favours. They were, when first created, free from concupiscence, from all disorderly desires, from disease of every kind, and immortal. Obedient to God in all things, Adam and Eve felt no inclination to sin, nor did they feel that revolt of the lower appetites that gives so much trouble to their descendants. Blessed beyond measure with intellect and wisdom, enriched with earthly goods, masters of the whole creation, our first parents, had they not fallen, would have lived a happy life in Paradise, and, after a few years of trial, would have received at the hands of God the reward that He has in store for the elect—an imperishable crown. However, to make them feel their dependence, to put their virtue to the test, God forbade them to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And the Lord commanded Adam, saying, "Of every tree of Paradise thou shalt eat, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat, for in what day soever thou shalt eat of it thou shalt die the death. . . . And the serpent said to the woman, Why hath God commanded that you should not eat of every tree of Paradise? And the woman answered him, saying: Of the fruit of the trees that are in Paradise we do eat, but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of Paradise, God hath commanded us that we should not eat;

and that we should not touch it, lest perhaps we die. And the serpent said to the woman, No, you shall not die the death. For God doth know that in what day soever you shall eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And the woman saw that the tree was good to eat, and fair to the eyes, and delightful to behold, and she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave to her husband, who did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened. . . . And the Lord God called Adam and said to him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard Thy voice in Paradise, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself. And He said to him: And who hath told thee that thou wast naked, but that thou hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat? And Adam said, The woman whom thou gavest me to be my companion, gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said to the woman, Why hast thou done this? And she answered, The serpent deceived me and I did eat. And the Lord God said to the serpent, Because thou hast done this thing, thou art cursed among all cattle and beasts of the earth. . . . I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel. To the woman also He said, I will multiply thy sorrows and thy conceptions; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children; and thou shalt be under thy husband's power, and he shall have dominion over thee. And to Adam He

said, Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat; cursed is the earth in thy work; with labour and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. . . . And the Lord God sent him out of the paradise of pleasure to till the earth from which he was taken. And He cast out Adam, and placed before the paradise of pleasure cherubims and a flaming sword turning every way to keep the way of the tree of life" (Gen. ii. 16, 17; iii. 1-24).

Adam and Eve, therefore, disobeyed, and by disobedience incurred the divine anger. Their sin was a most grievous one, for they questioned the veracity of God, and brought upon themselves and their children fearful woes—the loss of heaven and of all those supernatural gifts that God in His mercy had conferred upon them. Stripped of all these priceless gifts, and of sanctifying grace, they were at once driven out of the presence of God, and were condemned to die, to suffer in this life afflictions of every kind, and in the next the tortures of the damned.

The supernatural state to which our first parents were raised comprised five things. Firstly, sanctifying grace, which was granted on account of that end for which they had been created, namely, the possession and supreme enjoyment of God in the world to come, the beatific vision, the clear sight of God, face to face (*facie ad faciem*), to use the words of the Apostle. Secondly, superior intellectual endowments that

enabled them to penetrate the mysteries of nature: "And Adam called all the beasts by their names, and all the fowls of the air, and all the cattle of the field" (Gen. ii. 20). Thirdly, the integrity of their nature. They were free from all concupiscence, from the irregular motions of the flesh. It was only after having fallen into sin that Adam and Eve perceived their nakedness and felt shame thereat. There was, previous to their fall, perfect harmony in their whole being. In them all the lower faculties obeyed the dictates of reason, and reason obeyed the voice of Heaven. Fourthly, immortality. In Adam we all sinned, and sin brought death into the world and all our woes. Fifthly, immunity from all disease. In Paradise there was no disease, no misery, the sufferings of this life being, as a rule, the penalty of sin. These gifts were altogether gratuitous. Man had no right to heaven, to the beatific vision, nor to the other invaluable graces that he received from his Creator. God might, had He chosen, have created man mortal. Immortality, freedom from all disease, and from the disorderly appetites, and sanctifying grace itself, were all free gifts, to which man had no claim whatever. God might have made man as he is at the present day, subject to the same concupiscences, the same sufferings, the same struggles, the same diseases, and to death itself. It was His infinite goodness that induced Him to raise man to a supernatural state and to bestow upon him these most precious gifts. That God raised man to a

supernatural state is an article of faith. Holy Church condemned Pelagius and his followers for denying the existence of such a state and the necessity of God's grace to enable men to save their souls. We hope, beloved brethren, on another occasion to lay bare the errors of this heresiarch, and to explain more fully, at the same time, the nature of original sin, of that sin that proved so fatal to our first parents and to their descendants.

AMEN.

VIII.

ON ORIGINAL SIN.

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death, and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned."—ROM. v. 12.

BELOVED brethren, our first parents committed a grievous sin in rebelling against that God Who had conferred upon them the most signal favours. They seem to have attached more importance to the words of the evil one, who told them that if they ate of the tree they would become the same as gods, knowing good and evil, than to the divine precept which forbade their tasting of the fruit of the tree under penalty of death; for God had said, "For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death" (Gen. ii. 17). The Apostle St. Paul tells us in his Epistle to the Romans that we have all sinned in Adam, and that death is the wages of sin: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death, and so death passed upon all men, in whom all have sinned" (Rom. v. 12). Again, "For as by the disobedience of one man many were made sinners; so also by the obedience of one many shall be made just" (Rom. v. 19); "But death reigned from

Adam unto Moses, even over them also who have not sinned" (Rom. v. 14). As, therefore, children who never could have committed actual sin have been doomed to die and suffer the penalty of sin, death being the wages of sin, they must have contracted original sin, so that in Adam the whole human race prevaricated. Holy Church has never ceased to inculcate this doctrine, which, according to some divines, must have been known to the heathen nations themselves. Certainly the Persians must have had an idea of the fall of man, who, according to the teaching of their priesthood, was seduced by an evil genius who had assumed the form of a serpent. The same notion is to be found amongst the Egyptians and other nations of antiquity.

A few extracts from the decrees of the Council of Trent on original sin will enable us to grasp the teaching of the Church on this matter. "Si quis non confitetur primum hominem Adam, cum mandatum Dei in Paradiso fuisset transgressus, statim sanctitatem et justitiam in qua constitutus fuerat amisisse incurrisseque per offensam prævaricationis hujusmodi iram et indignationem Dei atque ideo mortem, quam antea illi comminatus fuerat Deus, et cum morte captivitatem sub ejus potestate qui mortis deinde habuit imperium, hoc est, diaboli, totumque Adam per illam prævaricationis offensam secundum corpus et animam in deterius commutatum fuisse anathema sit"—"If anyone will not confess that the first man, Adam, did by transgressing the divine precept lose that holiness

and righteousness with which he had been enriched, and incur by his prevarication the anger and indignation of God, and suffer the penalty of death which God had already threatened him, and with death servitude under the power of the devil, who was to have henceforth dominion over death, and that Adam was not by that prevarication altered for the worse both in soul and body—if there be one who shall not confess these truths, let him be accursed." "If any man," says the Council, "shall presume to say that Adam's prevarication injured himself alone and not his descendants, and that his sin entailed upon himself alone and not upon us the loss of holiness and justice, and that he transmitted to the whole human race death and the suffering of the flesh and not sin, which is the death of the soul, let him be accursed." We see, therefore, that according to the Council of Trent our first parents, by their sin, lost for themselves and their descendants that holiness and justice, that sanctifying grace with which God had blessed them, incurred the divine anger, and, having suffered deterioration in mind and body, were doomed to everlasting perdition. This sin we all inherit, being all conceived in sin. Some may be scandalized at this doctrine, and find it hard to understand how children should suffer for the sins of their parents. Still, we witness this every day. How many suffer on this account, never ceasing to bewail the folly of an infatuated father! Besides, if we understand this doctrine rightly, we shall not be in the least scandal-

ized. Original sin is the death of the soul, and consists in our being deprived of that righteousness, of that grace, of that integrity, for which we had been created, and which we should possess had we not fallen in Adam. Having been created for a supernatural end, this defect, this lack of a gift that we should possess, is in us a sin, and a grievous one, that renders us odious in the eyes of God, as we appear before Him bereft of our inheritance and of those priceless gifts that could alone endear us to that most perfect of beings. St. Thomas writes: "Sic privatio originalis justitiæ per quam voluntas subdebatur Deo, est formale in peccato originali"—"The absence of original justice, of sanctifying grace, by which the human will was subject unto God, is to be considered as the essence of original sin"—death, disease, concupiscence, inclination to evil, being only the effects of sin. That we all sinned in Adam is a doctrine which the holy Fathers proclaimed from the very beginning. St. Justin declares that Christ was crucified, not to save Himself, but the whole human race lost in Adam. St. Irenæus, the illustrious Doctor of the second century, is most precise on the matter. "In the first Adam," says the Saint, "we offended God, not keeping His commandments; in the second we are reconciled, being obedient unto death"—"Deum, inquit, in primo Adam offendimus, non facientes ejus præceptum, in secundo Adam reconciliati sumus, obedientes usque ad mortem facti." Tertullian, St. Cyprian, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome,

St. Augustine, all the Doctors of the primitive Church, express themselves in similar terms. St. Cyprian ordered children to be baptized immediately after birth, though they had contracted no stain but that of their parents. The manner in which baptism is administered furnishes us with another argument in favour of this doctrine. Children have been always baptized for the remission of sin, and, as they could not be guilty of actual sin, the Sacrament must have been administered for the remission of original sin. That the Church always upheld this doctrine is also proved by the teaching of all those heretics who had separated themselves from the Roman Church before Pelagius began to dogmatize. The followers of Novatian, the Donatists, the Arians—they all profess this truth. It must, therefore, have been the doctrine of the Church from the very beginning. This will account for the words of St. Vincent Lirinensis: "Whoever, before Pelagius, was bold enough to deny that the whole human race had been defiled by the sin of Adam?" "Should a Jew," says St. John Chrysostom, "ask you how could Christ have saved the whole human race, ask him how did the disobedience of one man entail misery upon all his descendants."

AMEN.

IX.

ON THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH.

"And the Lord God said to the serpent, Because thou hast done this thing I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; and she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel."—GEN. iii. 14, 15.

IN these words the Lord promised a Redeemer, One Who would deliver the world from the empire of Satan, and reconcile God with man. This promise was frequently renewed. When God called Abraham He blessed him, and in his seed all the nations of the earth. "And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and magnify thy name, and thou shalt be blessed. I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee, and in thee shall all the kindred of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xii. 2, 3). Also, when Abraham gave the most signal proof of his obedience, stretching forth his hand to strike his only son, the Lord blessed him, and promised that in his seed all the nations should be blessed. "Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not spared thy only begotten son for My sake, I will bless thee, and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand that is by the sea-shore:

and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed My voice" (Gen. xxii. 16-18). The same promise was made unto Isaac. "And the Lord appeared to him and said: Go not down into Egypt; but stay in the land that I shall tell thee, and sojourn in it, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee, for to thee and unto thy seed I will give all these countries to fulfil the oath which I swore to Abraham thy father. And I will multiply thy seed like the stars of heaven, and I will give to thy posterity all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xxvi. 2-4).

Jacob's vision, and the promise made to that patriarch, is referred to in these words in the Book of Genesis: "And he saw in his sleep a ladder standing upon the earth, and the top thereof touching heaven, the angels also of God ascending and descending by it. And the Lord leaning upon the ladder, saying to him, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land wherein thou sleepest I will give to thee, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. And in thee and thy seed all the tribes of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. xxviii. 12-14). When Jacob was dying he called together all his children and blessed them, and turning towards Juda, addressed him in these prophetic words: "Juda, thee shall thy brethren praise: thy hands

shall be on the necks of thy enemies, the sons of thy father shall bow down to thee. Juda is a lion's whelp: to the prey, my son, thou art gone up: resting thou hast couched as a lion, and as a lioness, who shall rouse him? The sceptre shall not be taken away from Juda, nor a ruler from his thigh, till he come that is to be sent, and he shall be the expectation of nations. Tying his foal to the vineyard, and his ass, O my son, to the vine, he shall wash his robe in wine, and his garment in the blood of the grape" (Gen. xlix. 8-11). These words refer to the descendants of the tribe of Juda, to the kings and great men who rendered that tribe illustrious, to David, to Solomon, but they are applicable in a special manner to our Divine Lord. He alone of all the descendants of Juda triumphed over all His enemies, and is praised and adored by all men. After having died upon the Cross the ignominious death of a slave, He raised His blessed body, on the third day, from the grave, and having passed forty days here below, encouraging and instructing His Apostles, He ascended into heaven, being accompanied by those innumerable souls whom He had delivered from the servitude of Satan. A lion is the strongest and most fearless of animals, and gives us an idea of the unconquerable power that Christ exercises over all His enemies. As the lion devours his prey and sleeps, to awake in a short time, and by his mighty roar strikes terror into the hearts of men and beasts, so Christ remained in the grave the space of three days,

sleeping the sleep of the just, and rose the third day glorious and immortal, filling, at the same time, the powers of darkness with terror and consternation. The patriarch declared that the sceptre, the supreme power, would not depart from the tribe of Judah until the Messiah came; and we know that the tribe of Juda remained supreme until the Romans placed upon the throne of David a foreign prince. As soon as the Jews had fallen under the hateful yoke of King Herod this prophecy was fulfilled, and the Messiah, the King of Peace, the Desired of Nations, came and delivered, not only His own people, but the whole human race, from the tyranny of the devil. Jesus being born at Bethlehem, there came wise men from the East, who inquired, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" Herod assembled the learned men of his kingdom, the priests and scribes, and asked them where the Messiah should be born. "But they said to him, In Bethlehem of Juda, for so it is written by the prophet: And thou, Bethlehem, the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda, for out of thee shall come forth the captain that shall rule my people Israel" (St. Matt. ii. 5, 6). The wretched king, who imagined that the Messiah had come to establish a temporal power, saw in the Child Jesus a rival to his throne, and determined to take away His life. The prediction of the prophet was accomplished, the priests, the scribes, and the learned men of the whole nation having informed their king that, according to prophecy, Bethlehem should be

the birthplace of the Messiah, and that the wise men would find in that city the Messiah, the Prince of Peace, the Desired of Nations.

Jews of every class, Pharisees and Sadducees, never hesitated to attribute the words of Jacob to the Messiah. This opinion was so strong, that in the days of John the Baptist they sent an embassy to ask him whether he was the Christ. On another occasion John answered those who had asked him whether he was the Christ in these words: "I indeed baptize you with water, but there shall come One mightier than I, the latchet of Whose shoes I am not worthy to loose, He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. . . . Now it came to pass when all the people were baptized, that, Jesus also being baptized and praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape as a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased" (St. Luke iii. 16-22).

The prophets had given distinctive marks that would enable all men to acknowledge the Messiah. He was to crush the serpent's head, to destroy the empire of Satan. In Him all the nations of the earth would be blessed: He was to bring a blessing upon the whole human race. Like Moses, He was to deliver His people and make them enter the promised land. "The Lord," says Moses, "will raise up to thee a Prophet of thy nation and of thy brethren like unto me: Him thou shalt hear" (Deut. xviii. 15).

St. Peter feared not to tell the Jews that God had sent them the great Prophet predicted by their liberator. "For Moses said, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him you shall hear according to all things whatsoever He shall speak to you" (Acts iii. 22). The Jews, who knew well that the time had arrived for the coming of the Prophet, were not in the the least offended at the words of Peter, so that the Apostle continued to upbraid them for not receiving the Christ Whom he announced. "And it shall be that every soul which will not hear that Prophet shall be destroyed from among the people, and all the prophets from Samuel and afterwards who have spoken, have told of these days. You are the children of the prophets, and of the testament which God made to our fathers, saying to Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed" (Acts iii. 23-25).

The prophet Isaias tells us that the "Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness" (Isa. xi. 2). "The Lord," says the same prophet, "hath anointed Me: He hath sent me to preach to the meek, to heal the contrite of heart, and to preach a release to the captives, and deliverance to them that are shut up" (Isa. lxi. 1). "The bruised reed He shall not break, and smoking flax He shall not quench" (Isa. xlii. 3). The prophets are so full of the Messiah that

they seem to have written His history by anticipation, giving in every page the distinctive marks, the characteristics, by which men should come to know Him, so that the very blind would be inexcusable for not seeing and receiving Him. "And when He was now coming near the descent of Mount Olivet, the whole multitude of His disciples began with joy to praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works they had seen, saying, Blessed be the King who cometh in the name of the Son, peace in heaven and glory on high! But some of the Pharisees from amongst the multitude, said to him: Master, rebuke Thy disciples. To whom He said: I say to you, that if these shall hold their voice, the stones will cry out" (St. Luke xix. 37-40).

AMEN.

X.

ON THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

"And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sins."—ST. MATT. i. 21.

ST. LUKE gives us an account of the birth of St. John the Baptist, the precursor of our Divine Lord. Zachary was officiating in the Temple when the angel of the Lord appeared and told him that his wife, Elizabeth by name, would conceive and bring forth a son. Zachary could scarcely believe the angel—his wife being barren, and he himself far advanced in years. When he asked for a sign, Gabriel told him that he should remain dumb until these things were accomplished. Meanwhile the people, who had remained outside, wondered why the priest tarried so long in the Temple, and imagined that he must have had a vision. Zachary came out, and was quite speechless. Elizabeth conceived, and in due time gave birth to a son. The neighbours would have the child to be called Zachary, after his father: the mother being unwilling, the father was consulted. Zachary asked for a table to write upon, and wrote thereon—"John." Immediately the priest's

mouth was opened, and his tongue was loosed, and he spoke and praised God, and was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, because He hath visited and wrought the redemption of His people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation to us in the house of David His servant, as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, who are from the beginning, salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us. . . . And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways; to give knowledge of salvation to His people unto the remission of their sins; to enlighten them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death" (St. Luke i. 68-79). Six months after this wonderful apparition, the same angel, Gabriel, was sent by God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to announce unto Mary that she had been chosen to be the mother of God. "Hail, full of grace," said the angel, addressing Mary, "the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. Who having heard was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said to her, Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS; He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father, and He shall reign in

the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said to the angel: How shall this be done, because I know not man? And the angel, answering, said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the most High shall overshadow thee. And, therefore, also, the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren: Because no word shall be impossible with God. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me according to thy word. . . . And Mary, rising up in those days, went into the hill-country with haste into a city of Juda. . . . And it came to pass that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. And she cried out with a loud voice, and said: Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb: and whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, behold, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord. And Mary said: My soul doth magnify the Lord, because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid; for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed; because He that is Mighty

hath done great things to me, and Holy is His name" (St. Luke i.).

At this time the Roman Emperor published a decree that there should be a census of the whole empire, and that everyone should be enrolled in his own city. Joseph, who was of the house of David, came up to Bethlehem to be there enrolled, bringing with him his espoused wife, Mary, who was with child. "And it came to pass that when they were there her days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born Son, and wrapped Him up in swaddling clothes and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

"And there were in the same country shepherds watching and keeping the night-watches over their flock. And, behold, an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them, and they feared with a great fear. And the angel said to them, Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy; for this day is born to you a Saviour Who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: you shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of goodwill. And they came with haste, and they found Mary and Joseph, and the Infant lying in the manger" (St. Luke ii. 8-16). Soon afterwards the

wise men came from the East to adore the Child Jesus. "We have seen," said they, "His star in the East, and are come to adore Him" St. Matt. ii. 2). Herod was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. The King assembled forthwith all the learned men of the kingdom and asked them where the Messiah should be born. They were all unanimous in declaring that, according to the predictions of the prophet, Bethlehem was to be the birthplace of the Messiah: "And thou Bethlehem, the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda, for out of thee shall come forth a Captain that shall rule my people Israel" (St. Matt. ii. 6).

After having made inquiries about the time when the star appeared, Herod told the wise men to go and search after the Child, and to come and let him know as soon as they had found Him, that he might go and worship Him. But in truth it was his intention to destroy the Child. Whereupon the wise men depart from Jerusalem; and scarcely have they left that city when the star appears, and guides them towards the spot in which the Messiah had been born. They enter the stable, and see the Child and Mary His mother, and, falling down, they worship Him, presenting unto Him gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Being warned by God, they did not return to Jerusalem, but went home another way. "And after they were departed, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying: Arise, and take the Child and His mother and fly into Egypt, and be

there until I shall tell thee, for it will come to pass that Herod will seek the Child to destroy Him" (St. Matt. ii. 13). Herod was sadly disappointed, and ordered all the children of Bethlehem, from two years old and under, to be destroyed, hoping that the Child Jesus would not escape. Then were fulfilled the words of the prophet: "A voice in Rama was heard; lamentation and great mourning — Rachel bewailing her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not" (St. Matt. ii. 18). Our Lord was circumcised on the eighth day, and received the name of Jesus. As soon as the days of purification were accomplished, our Lord was presented in the Temple. It was on that occasion that the holy man Simeon gave utterance to these prophetic words. Taking the Child Jesus in his arms, he blessed God, and said: "Now Thou dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word in peace; because my eyes have seen Thy salvation which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples—a light to the revelation of the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel. And His father and mother were wondering at those things which were spoken concerning Him: and Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, Behold this Child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted. And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed."

Then Joseph arose, and to avoid the hatred of

Herod, took the Child and His mother and went into Egypt, where they remained until the King's death. They then returned, and settled in Nazareth, a city of Galilee, so that the words of the prophet were fulfilled: "He shall be called a Nazarite." "And the child grew and waxed strong, full of wisdom, and the grace of God was in Him." St. Luke tells us that when the Child Jesus was twelve years old, He went up to Jerusalem to celebrate, in the company of His parents, the Paschal Feast. "And His parents," says the Evangelist, "went every year to Jerusalem at the solemn day of the pasch. And when He was twelve years old they going up into Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast: and having fulfilled the days, when they returned, the Child Jesus remained in Jerusalem, and His parents knew it not. And thinking He was in the company, they came a day's journey, and sought Him among their kinsfolks and acquaintance. And not finding Him, they returned into Jerusalem, seeking Him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found Him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His wisdom and His answers. And seeing Him they wondered: and His mother said to Him: Son, why hast Thou done so to us? behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing. And He said to them, How is it that you sought Me? did you not

know that I must be about My Father's business? And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and grace with God and men" (St. Luke ii.).

AMEN.

XI.

ON THE PREDICTIONS OF THE PROPHETS.

"John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there hath stood One in the midst of you, Whom you know not, the same is He that shall come after me, Who is preferred before me, the latchet of Whose shoe I am not worthy to loose."—St. John i. 26, 27.

As Daniel prayed for the restoration of Israel, the angel Gabriel appeared and informed the prophet of the number of years that should elapse before the coming of the Messiah. "Seventy weeks are shortened upon thy people and upon thy holy city that transgression may be finished and sin may have an end, and iniquity may be abolished, and everlasting justice may be brought, and vision and prophecy may be fulfilled, and the Saint of saints may be anointed. Know thou, therefore, and take notice, that from the going forth of the word to build up Jerusalem again, unto Christ the prince there shall be seven weeks, and sixty-two weeks: and the street shall be built again and the walls in straitness of times. And after sixty-two weeks Christ shall be slain, and the people that shall deny Him shall not be His, and a people with their leader that shall come shall destroy

the city and the sanctuary: and the end thereof shall be waste, and after the end of the war the appointed desolation. And He shall confirm the covenant with many in one week, and in the half of the week the victim and the sacrifice shall fail, and there shall be in the temple the abomination of desolation, and the desolation shall continue even to the consummation, and to the end" (Dan. ix. 24-27). Seventy weeks, that is to say, in Scriptural language, seventy weeks of years, seventy Sabbaths of years, as we read in Leviticus—four hundred and ninety years—are to elapse from the rebuilding of the Temple, under the Persian king Artaxerxes, from the going forth of the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, unto the Messiah, Who will put an end to sin and iniquity, fulfil in His person the predictions of the prophet, establish on earth peace, justice, and righteousness, and reconcile earth and heaven. During the first Sabbath of years the Temple shall be rebuilt, and after sixty-two Sabbaths the Messiah shall be cut off and the guilty people punished by a foreign prince, who shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. In the last week the Messiah shall confirm the covenant with God and His people, shall prove by His miracles that He is the Christ, the Anointed of the Lord, the Desired of Nations, and by His Sacrifice atone for the sins of the whole human race. Henceforth, all other sacrifices shall cease to exist, for figures must make room for the reality. The altar of the Lord shall be profaned, and His

Temple desecrated, and, in punishment of their sins, the whole nation shall perish and the land shall be made desolate. Now, all this has been fulfilled in our Divine Lord, and in Him alone. He was born when the years announced by the prophet had nearly elapsed, about the year 753 of Rome. The year in which the commandment went forth to rebuild the Temple corresponds with the year 300 of Rome, and our Lord began His public life about the year 783 of Rome, that is to say, in the beginning of the seventieth week alluded to by the prophet Daniel. He was put to death about the year 787 of Rome, which year corresponds with the middle of the said week, and then the sacrifice and oblation ceased, and gloom and desolation overspread the land. Truly, He was the great Prophet announced by Daniel. He put an end to sin and iniquity, and in Him all the predictions of the prophets were fulfilled. He came to appease the anger of an irritated God, to reconcile heaven and earth, and to give peace to all men of goodwill. He was the Most Holy One, for in Him did dwell the plenitude of the Godhead. He was, however, put to death by His own people, and their crime brought upon them unheard-of woes. A few years after the death of our Lord their country was invaded by a Roman army, and their city besieged. After six months' siege Jerusalem was taken and destroyed, the Temple, which was the wonder of the age, having been set on fire and reduced to a heap of ashes. The unfortunate inhabitants were nearly all put to the

sword or sold as slaves. Titus, the Roman general, who took the city, was so afflicted when he saw that the Temple had been consumed in the flames, that he took Heaven to witness that it was not his work, but that of God, exasperated by the iniquities of a wicked and impious race. For 1,800 years the Jews have wandered from one country to another, a wretched and miserable people, and the objects of the execration of the human race, having, as it were, written in indelible characters upon their foreheads, the decree of everlasting reprobation to which the Lord in His justice hath condemned them. Several times they tried, in defiance of Heaven, to rebuild their Temple, but in vain, the Lord God having struck them down and terrified them with His thunderbolts when they attempted to execute their nefarious design.

Another prophet, Aggeus by name, consoled the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who grieved when they saw that the second Temple bore no comparison to the first, telling them that the one they had just erected would be far superior to that of Solomon, because it would be blessed with the presence of one greater than Solomon. "Who is left among you," said the prophet, "that saw this house in its first glory? And how do you see it now? Is it not in comparison to that as nothing in your eyes? . . . For, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, yet one little while and I will move the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land. And I will move all nations, and the Desired of all Nations shall come, and I will fill

this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts. Great shall be the glory of this last house more than of the first, saith the Lord of Hosts, and in this place I will give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Aggeus ii. 4-10). These words are so clear that they demand no explanation; they speak for themselves. The prophet consoles his fellow-countrymen and tells them that they must not give way to despondency at the sight of the poverty of their temple; for it shall one day be visited by the Desired of Nations, Who will fill it with majesty and glory.

The prophet Malachi announced the coming of the Messiah, and the precursor who should prepare the way before Him. "Behold, I send My angel, and he shall prepare the way before My face, and presently the Lord Whom you seek, and the Angel of the Testament Whom you desire, shall come to His Temple: behold, he cometh, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Mal. i. 3). And when the Jews sent priests and Levites to ask John the Baptist who he was, he confessed that he was not the Christ. He said: "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaias. . . . I baptize with water, but there hath stood One in the midst of you Whom you know not. The same is He that shall come after me, Who is preferred before me" (St. John i. 23-27). He, therefore, told the Jews that he was not the Messiah, but that the Messiah had come, that He was among them, that the prediction of the prophet was fulfilled, and he had been sent

to announce the Christ, to point Him out, and to dispose the people to receive Him. It was the prophet Malachi that told the Jews that one day their sacrifices would cease to exist, and that instead of them a pure Oblation would be offered to God throughout the whole world. "I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will not receive a gift of your hand. For from the rising of the sun even to the going down My name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a clean oblation, for My name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Mal. i. 10, 11). Now the sacrifices of the old law have come to an end, and this the Jews are obliged to confess, but where is the new Oblation? In the Catholic Church, in the most holy Sacrifice of the Mass. This Sacrifice is offered everywhere from the rising to the going down of the sun. It is most pleasing to God; it appeases His anger, renders Him propitious unto each one of us, and induces Him to grant us favours innumerable. The Victim of our altars is pure and immaculate, being the Son of God Himself, present on our altars under the appearances of bread and wine. How thankful we should be to our Divine Lord for this great grace! How careful we should be to visit our temples, and to prostrate ourselves in the dust whilst this august Victim is being immolated in honour of the one true and living God!

AMEN.

XII.

ON THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of goodwill."—St. Luke ii. 14.

In the ninth chapter of the Gospel of St. John we read an account of the manner in which Jesus restored sight to the man born blind. He rubbed his eyes with a little clay, and told him to go and wash himself in the waters of Siloam. He went, he washed himself, and he saw. The neighbours, who knew the man well, for he was in the habit of begging daily at the gate of the Temple, were astonished at seeing that he had recovered sight, and as some were doubtful as to his identity, the blind man told them that he was the very same individual, and that Jesus had restored his sight. "He answered: That man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed my eyes, and said to me, Go to the pool of Siloe and wash. And I went, I washed, and I see" (St. John ix. 11). They brought him to the Pharisees, who questioned the man about the manner in which he had been cured, and sent for his parents to identify him, and to know whether he spoke the truth. "They (the Pharisees) said then to him, What did He to

thee? how did He open thy eyes? He answered them, I have told you already, and you have heard, why would you hear it again, will you also become His disciples?" (St. John ix. 26, 27). And as they reviled the blind man for his presumption, he answered and said unto them: "Why, herein is a wonderful thing, that you know not from whence He is, and He hath opened mine eyes. Now, we know that God doth not hear sinners, but if a man be a server of God, and doth His will, him He heareth. From the beginning of the world it hath not been heard that any man hath opened the eyes of one born blind. Unless this man were of God He could not do anything. . . . Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and when He had found him, He saith to him: Dost thou believe in the Son of God? He answered and said: Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him? And Jesus said to him, Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee. And he said, I believe, Lord; and falling down he adored Him" (St. John ix. 30-38). Here our Divine Lord, having declared that He was the Son of God, was forthwith acknowledged as such by the man born blind, who prostrated himself at the feet of his benefactor, of his heavenly Master, and adored Him. Jesus was worshipped and adored as God, and to persuade men that He was God, He worked the most stupendous miracles. Having declared that He was God, He appealed to Heaven to vouch for the veracity of His teaching, and immediately the voice

of the Father was heard, and bore witness to His Son.

"For where there are two or three gathered together in My name," says our Lord, "there am I in the midst of them" (St. Matt. xviii. 20). What can He mean by these words but that He is present everywhere, but that He is God? Again, He says: "If anyone love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him" (St. John xiv. 23). He is, then, equal to the Father, and, like the Father, He will dwell in us if we keep His commandments. Now, beloved brethren, let us ask ourselves this question, What impression did this language produce upon the Jews? What construction did they put upon the words of our Divine Lord? It is evident that they took them in a literal sense, for otherwise they could not have been scandalized at the doctrine that He announced. They were shocked at His saying that He was the Son of God, and equal to the Father in all things. They cast stones at Him, not because of His works, but because He said that God was His Father, making Himself equal to God. "For a good work we stone Thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God" (St. John x. 33). When the high priest adjured our Lord to say whether He was the Christ, the Son of God, Jesus answered that He was, and that hereafter they should see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of God. "Then the high priest rent his

garments, saying, He hath blasphemed; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now, you have heard the blasphemy, what think you? But they answering said, He is guilty of death" (St. Matt. xxvi. 65, 66). Also, when Pilate hesitated to stain his hands with innocent blood, the Jews cried out: "We have a law, and according to the law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God" (St. John xix. 7). It was our Divine Lord Himself who gave the Jews and Pharisees this belief, by frequently assuming the prerogatives of the divinity, and appealing to His works, and especially to His resurrection, as an incontrovertible proof of the veracity of His teaching. "And Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and He found in the temple them that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money sitting, and when He had made a scourge of little cords, He drove them all out of the temple, the sheep also, and the oxen, and the money of the changers He poured out, and the tables He overthrew, and to them that sold doves, He said: Take these things hence, and make not the house of My Father a house of traffic. . . . The Jews therefore answered and said to Him, What sign dost Thou show unto us, seeing that Thou dost these things? Jesus answered and said to them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. The Jews then said, Six and forty years was this temple in building, and wilt Thou raise it up in three days? But He spoke of the temple of His body. When, therefore, He was risen again from

the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had said" (St. John ii. 13-22). Jesus appealed to the testimony of John, who bore witness to Him. "The next day John saw Jesus coming to him, and he saith, Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him Who taketh away the sin of the world. This is He of whom I said, After me there cometh a man Who is preferred before me, because He was before me. And I knew Him not, but that He may be made manifest to Israel; therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John gave testimony, saying, I saw the Spirit coming down as a dove from heaven, and He remained upon Him. And I knew Him not, but He Who sent me to baptize with water, said to me, He upon Whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining upon Him, He it is that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw and I gave testimony that this is the Son of God" (St. John i. 29-34). Jesus appealed to His own works. But "I have," saith Jesus, answering the Jews, who wanted to kill Him for having said that He was equal to the Father, "a greater testimony than that of John, for the works which the Father hath given Me to perfect, the works themselves which I do give testimony of Me, that the Father hath sent Me. And the Father Himself, Who hath sent Me, hath given testimony of Me; neither have you heard His voice at any time nor seen His shape" (St. John v. 36, 37).

All the Evangelists teach us the divinity of our Divine Lord. We read in St. Luke that the angel who was sent unto Mary declared that she should conceive and bring forth a Son, and that He should be called the Son of the Most High. St. John begins His Gospel with these words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (St. John i. 1, 14). St. Paul thus addresses the Philippians: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Phil. ii. 6). Being God, being equal to the Father in all things, possessing the plenitude of the divinity, it was but just that He should speak openly, and proclaim Himself the Son of God; but in order to reconcile us with God He became man, He debased Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of a man. The sin of our first parents, being a sin against heaven, a sin of rebellion against God Himself, was a most heinous sin, and one o infinite malice. This sin man could not blot out, so that he would have been irreparably lost had not God had pity upon him. "For God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting" (St. John iii. 16). The only-begotten Son of the Most High became man without ceasing to be God. As man He suffered, He died for us; and as God He deified His sufferings, and offered to His heavenly Father a satisfaction of an infinite value,

being that of an Incarnate God, and in every respect adequate to the injury done Him by sinful man. Having fully atoned by His Passion and Death for the sins of men, He bridged over that impassable gulf that separated heaven and earth, and established perpetual peace between God and man. "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of goodwill" (St. Luke ii. 14). He opened unto us the gates of heaven, and restored unto each one of us that inheritance that we had lost through the sin of Adam. Can we imagine what we owe this heavenly Master? The favours that He conferred upon our race are great indeed. It was Jesus who delivered us from the tyranny of Satan, and restored us to the liberty of children of God. When He appeared, the whole world was buried in sin. The most civilized nations lay prostrate before gods of wood and stone, and adored either the works of their own hands, or the most unclean beasts of the field. Idolatry, slavery, and depravity in its most hideous shape were everywhere supreme. What a change has taken place! Idolatry has disappeared, and the temples of false gods have been levelled to the ground. The true God is honoured in every country and by all civilized nations, and the love that men have for their dear Lord fills them with charity for their fellow-men. Men devote their whole lives to succour the wretched and forlorn, and monuments of the heavenly spirit that animates them towards the helpless of every age and condition of life are to be seen

in all Christian countries. For these favours we cannot be too grateful, and at this holy season we should convince the world by our good works that we are true followers of Christ, and ever ready, even at the peril of our lives, to walk in His footsteps.

AMEN.

XIII.

ON OUR DIVINE LORD.

"But if I say the truth, you believe Me not."—St. John viii. 45.

They believed Him not because they were led astray by the devil, the father of liars, who had seduced and prevented them from opening their eyes and seeing the miracles which our Lord performed. "Which of you shall convince Me of sin?" (St. John viii. 46). Can you pretend that I am a sinner and therefore unworthy of confidence? Our Lord could not sin: He was impeccable. Even in this life He enjoyed the beatific vision, that vision that beatifies the elect, and prevents their having any desire but that of being united with God. The hypostatical union that existed between the divine and human nature in His sacred person prevented His falling into sin. There being in Christ two distinct natures and one person, the person of God the Son, all His actions were those of a divine person, and consequently divine and sinless. He could, therefore, appeal to His whole life and defy His enemies to bring the slightest charge against Him. He had passed His life in doing good, in conferring upon men the most signal favours, in giving

sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, in raising the dead to life. These favours He had conferred upon the men who were now attributing His works to the devil, to Beelzebub. They did not hear Him, because they were not of God. "He that is of God heareth the words of God" (St. John viii. 47).

The Pharisees, whom our Lord addressed, hated Him so intensely that they would not even listen to His words when He spoke. They were jealous of our Lord and of the great influence that He exercised over the minds of men, and the wounds that His reproaches caused remained unhealed. His bitter words were still rankling in their hearts. He had accused them of hypocrisy, of having falsified the law, of imposing upon others a yoke that they could not bear themselves. They were whited sepulchres, beautiful outside, but within full of filth and dead men's bones. They were not of God: they were children of Satan, and being animated with a diabolical spirit, they rejected Christ and the doctrine that He taught, and brought upon themselves and their descendants endless sufferings. Are we, beloved brethren, animated with this spirit? Those who love not the Word of God are, if we may believe St. Gregory, exposed to great danger of being lost. On the contrary, we may, according to this great Saint, consider ourselves amongst the elect if we feel that we are animated with a great desire of listening to the Word of God, and of following the inspirations that we receive from above.

"The Jews therefore answered and said to Him, Do not we say well that Thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil?" (St. John viii. 48). Our Lord, having been brought up in Nazareth, which town is situated to the north of Samaria, was called a Samaritan. The Samaritans were idolaters, for although they followed the law of Moses, they nevertheless worshipped false gods, and especially those of Assyria. As our Lord preached a new doctrine, His enemies accused Him of having falsified the law of God, and of establishing a religion unheard of before. They accused Him of working miracles in the name of Beelzebub, and of arrogating to Himself the prerogatives of the Divinity. He was a blasphemer, having said that He was God, and was therefore worthy of death. "I have not a devil," answered Jesus, "but I honour My Father, and you have dishonoured Me. But I seek not My own glory: there is One that seeketh and judgeth" (St. John viii. 49, 50).

Jesus came to undo the work of the devil, to atone for our sins, and to purchase for us eternal life. He came to make known to, and adored by, all nations, the one God, the all Holy. He did not seek His own glory but that of the Father Who had sent Him. He was therefore exalted above all beings, "Who was predestinated the Son of God in power, according to the spirit of sanctification, by the resurrection . . . from the dead" (Rom. i. 4).

"Amen, amen, I say to you, if any man keep My word, he shall not see death for ever" (St. John

viii. 51). Yes, the doctrine that I announce is truly the word of God, and if you keep it you shall never die. Fortified with this heavenly word, you shall persevere until the end in the grace of God, which is the life of the soul, and die only to rise at the last day glorious and immortal.

"Now we know that Thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead and the prophets, and Thou sayest, If a man keep My word he shall not taste death for ever" (St. John viii. 52). Our Lord alluded to spiritual death, and not to that of the body. His enemies misinterpreted His words, and seemed, at first sight, justified in taking offence at the language He had used. Abraham kept the word of God and is dead. Art Thou greater than our father Abraham, and dost Thou presume to say that they who shall keep Thy word shall live for ever, when God Himself failed to confer immortality upon His most faithful followers?

"If I glorify Myself," said Jesus, "My glory is nothing: it is My Father that glorifieth Me, of Whom you say that He is your God. And you have not known Him, but I know Him, and if I shall say that I know Him not I shall be like to you a liar; but I do know Him and do keep His word" (St. John viii. 54, 55). The Father honoureth Me, and if ye knew the Father ye would know and honour the Son Whom the Father hath sent to save mankind. But I know the Father, and I fulfil His will in all things, being born of the Father from all eternity, being one and the same Lord and God as He is.

"Abraham your father rejoiced that he might see My day, he saw it and was glad" (St. John viii. 56). Abraham and the prophets longed to see the day when I should appear for the first time in your midst: they now see it and rejoice. For two thousand years that great patriarch had been sighing for this happy hour, and at last this desire has been satisfied. To him it has been granted to contemplate from his terrestrial paradise the fulfilment of the great promise that God had made unto him, namely, that in his seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed. "Thou art not fifty years old," said the Jews, "and hast Thou seen Abraham!" "Amen, amen, I say to you before Abraham was made, I am" (St. John viii. 57, 58). In these words Jesus declared Himself to be God—to be eternal. For, as Tertullian remarked, inasmuch as He says that He existed before Abraham He claims to be God, having existed as man long after the days of that patriarch, the life that He lived previous to the days of Abraham must have been of the life that He received from the Father from all eternity. This was the interpretation that the Jews put upon His words, for they took up stones to cast at Him. We must admire the fortitude that our Lord displayed on this occasion. Let us imitate Him, and never fear to bear witness to the truth even at the peril of our lives.

AMEN.

XIV.

ON THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man."—PHIL. ii. 6, 7.

JESUS CHRIST is God the Son made man. When the fulness of time was come, the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us. We read in St. Luke the following account of this mystery: "The angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel being come in, said unto her, Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women. Who having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said to her, Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God; behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High. . . . And Mary said to the angel, How shall this be done,

because I know not man? And the angel, answering, said to her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee, and therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. . . . And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word" (St. Luke i. 26-38). The moment our blessed Lady consented to become the Mother of God the Word became flesh. A body was formed in the virginal womb of Mary, a soul was created by the Most High; and to that body and soul, to that Sacred humanity, the divinity was united in the person of God the Son, and in due time Mary gave birth to a Son, Who is the Son of the Most High, and equal to the Father in all things. Jesus Christ is truly God. "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Phil. ii. 6). The teaching of St. Paul is that of all the Apostles. The Gospel of St. John is full of the divinity of our Divine Lord. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing that was made" (St. John i. 1, 3). "The next day John saw Jesus coming to him, and he saith, Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him Who taketh away the sin of the world. This is He of Whom I said, After me there cometh a man Who is preferred before me, because He was before me. And I knew Him not, but that He may be made manifest in Israel, therefore am I come baptizing

with water. And John gave testimony, saying, I saw the Spirit coming down as a dove from heaven, and He remained upon Him. And I knew Him not; but He who sent me to baptize with water, said to me, He upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, He it is that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and I gave testimony that this is the Son of God" (St. John i. 29, 34). The event referred to by St. John is related by St. Luke in the following words: "Now it came to pass when all the people were baptized, that Jesus also being baptized, and, praying, heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, as a dove, upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, Thou art My beloved Son, in Thee I am well pleased" (St. Luke iii. 21, 22). The same voice was heard the day our Lord was transfigured in the presence of the three chosen Apostles: "And after six days, Jesus taketh unto Him Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, and He was transfigured before them. And His face did shine as the sun and His garments became white as snow. And behold there appeared to them Moses and Elias, talking with Him. And Peter answering said to Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles—one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias. And as he was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them, and lo a voice out of the cloud saying, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am

well pleased" (St. Matt. xvii. 1-5). We read in the sixth chapter of St. John an account of the manner in which Peter confessed Christ. When our Lord asked the twelve whether they would disbelieve His word when He declared that He would feed them with His body and blood, and leave Him as the Jews, and His disciples had done, Peter answered: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we have believed and have known that Thou art the Christ the Son of God" (St. John vi. 69, 70). This profession of faith St. Peter made a second time, and on a most solemn occasion. "And Jesus came into the quarters of Cesarea Philippi, and He asked His disciples, saying, Whom do men say that the Son of Man is? But they said, Some John the Baptist, and other some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the Prophets. Jesus saith to them, But whom do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answering said to him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father Who is in heaven. And I say to thee that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth it shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth it shall be loosed also in heaven" (St. Matt. xvi. 13-19). Here our Lord praises St. Peter for having proclaimed

Him to be the Son of God; and this profession of His chosen Apostle He attributes not to flesh and blood, not to earthly wisdom, but to His heavenly Father, to that divine light that cometh from above. Our Lord rewards this profession of faith by conferring upon him the most signal favour, choosing him to be the head of His Church, the foundation-stone which was to give stability to that edifice that He had come to erect. Jesus attributes therefore to Himself the prerogatives of the divinity, He proclaims Himself to be God. "I and the Father," says He, "are one" (St. John x. 30). To convince the Jews of the truth of this doctrine He appealed to His works, to His miracles, and to the greatest of all His miracles—His own resurrection from the dead; and this was the charge the high priest brought against Him when he condemned Him to die. "And the chief priests and the whole council sought false witness against Jesus, that they might put Him to death, and they found not; whereas many false witnesses had come in. And last of all there came two false witnesses, and they said, This man said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and after three days to rebuild it. And the high priest rising up said to Him, Answerest Thou nothing to the things which these witness against Thee? But Jesus held His peace. And the high priest said to Him, I adjure Thee by the living God that Thou tell us if Thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith to him, Thou hast said it; nevertheless, I say to

you hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his garments, saying, He hath blasphemed, what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now, you have heard the blasphemy, what think ye? But they answering said, He is guilty of death" (St. Matt. xxvi. 59-66). Our Lord was, therefore, condemned for having said that He was the Son of God. This doctrine He taught publicly, and sealed it with His own blood. To convince men of His divinity He appealed to Heaven, and Heaven ratified His teaching by the most stupendous miracles. Having told the Jews that He was before Abraham, that He was eternal, He appealed to God to witness the truth of what He had said, and restored forthwith to perfect sight the man that had been born blind. "Now we know," said the blind man, "that God doth not hear sinners; but if a man be a server of God and doth His will, him He heareth. From the beginning of the world it hath not been heard that any man hath opened the eyes of one born blind. Unless this man were of God, He could not do anything" (St. John ix. 31-33).

AMEN.

XV.

ON THE PROPHECIES CONCERNING OUR LORD.

"He findeth first his brother Simon, and saith to him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ." —St. John i. 41.

Our Lord came, beloved brethren, to reconcile God and man; He came to abolish the sacrifices, the priesthood of the old Law, and substitute in their stead a new Sacrifice, and a priesthood, not of the order of Aaron, but of Melchisedek. "I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will not receive a gift of your hand. For from the rising of the sun even to the going down My name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a clean oblation, for My name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Mal. i. 10, 11). The Lord declares that He will receive no more sacrifices from His people, and that in their stead a new sacrifice shall be offered up—a pure oblation made in His honour throughout the whole world. The prophet Malachi refers to a real sacrifice, to one that should be offered up everywhere, and that should be the distinctive mark of the religion that the Messias should establish,

not only in Jerusalem but in every part of the habitable globe. Daniel had already predicted that as soon as the Messias came, the sacrifices of the old Law should be abolished and a new order of things established. The coming of the Messias was to be followed by the conversion of the Gentiles. In Him all the nations of the earth should be blessed; He should be the anointed of the Lord, the King of peace, the desired of nations, and draw all unto Him. "Ask of Me," says the royal prophet, "and I will give thee the Gentiles for thy inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Ps. ii. 8). "All the ends of the earth shall remember and shall be converted to the Lord, and all the kindreds of the Gentiles shall adore in His sight" (Ps. xxi. 28). Isaias also speaks of this event in the following prophetic words: "And in the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it, and many people shall go and say, Come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths, for the law shall come forth from Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge the Gentiles, and rebuke many people, and they shall turn their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into sickles. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they be exercised any more to war" (Isa. ii. 2-4) The

prophets not only predicted the conversion of nations, they also renounced the rejection of the people of God. "And after sixty-two weeks," says the prophet, "Christ shall be slain, and the people that shall deny Him shall not be His. And a people with their leader that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be waste, and after the end of the war the appointed desolation" (Dan. ix. 26). Isaias, also referring to the Messias, says: "And He shall be . . . for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence to the two houses of Israel, for a snare and a ruin to the inhabitants of Jerusalem" (Isa. viii. 14). The state of the unfortunate Jews is thus graphically described by the prophet Osee: "For the children of Israel shall sit many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without altar, and without ephod, and without teraphim" (Osee iii. 4). All this has happened; the predictions of the prophets have been fulfilled. A new Sacrifice and a new priesthood have been established, and men of all nations have acknowledged Jesus of Nazareth as their Lord and Master. The Jews are no longer the people of God; their sacrifices and their priesthood have been rejected, and their temple and altars have been levelled to the ground.

How is it, say St. Jerome, addressing the Jews of his day, that the most merciful Lord, Who never before forgot you, should remain for years deaf to your prayers and supplications and refuse to put an

end to your miserable captivity? For what crime hath He turned away His eyes from His own people? Can you tell me? Ah! remember the words of your forefathers, "Let His blood be upon us and our children!" (St. Matt. xxvii. 25). Yes, beloved brethren, the predictions of the prophets have been fulfilled in our Divine Lord. At His birth the time appointed by Jacob for the coming of the Messias had arrived, for the throne of David was no longer occupied by his descendants, the Romans having appointed Herod the Idumean king of Judea. Our Lord was put to death in the middle of the last year of the Sabbaths of the prophecy of Daniel, and His death was followed by the abolition of the sacrifices, and of the priesthood of the old law, the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem, the ruin of the people, and the desolation of the whole land. Then a new religion was founded, and a pure Victim offered to God from the rising to the going down of the sun. In Jesus all the prophecies were accomplished. He was born in Bethlehem. "And thou, Bethlehem, the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda, for out of thee shall come forth a Captain that shall rule My people Israel" (St. Matt. ii. 6). According to the prophet Isaias the Messias was to be born of a virgin. "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel" (Isaias vii. 14). And Jesus was born in Bethlehem of the Virgin Mary. The entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem is described by Zacharias in these words:

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion; shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King will come to thee, the Just and Saviour, He is poor, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass" (Zach. ix. 9). One would imagine that the royal prophet had been an eye-witness of the Passion and sufferings of our Lord. "O God, my God," exclaims David, "why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Psa. xxi. 1). "I am a worm and no man, the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people. And they that saw me have laughed me to scorn, they have spoken with the lips, and wagged the head. He hoped in the Lord, let Him deliver him: let Him save him, seeing He delighteth in him" (Psa. xxi. 7-9). "I am poured out like water, and all my bones are scattered; my heart is become like wax melting in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue hath cleaved to my jaws, and Thou hast brought me down into the dust of death. . . . The council of the malignant have besieged me; they have dug My hands and feet. . . . They parted My garments amongst them, and upon My vesture they cast lots" (Psa. xxi. 15-19). We have only to open the books of the Evangelists to see how these prophetic words have been fulfilled in Jesus and in Him alone. "And after they had crucified Him," says St. Matthew, "they divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: They divided My garments among them and upon My vesture they cast lots"

(St. Matt. xxvii. 35). "The chief priests, with the scribes and ancients mocking, said, He trusted in God, let Him now deliver Him, if He will have Him. . . . And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, Lamma Sabacthani, that is, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (St. Matt. xxvii. 41-46).

The prophets having been sent by God to prepare men for the coming of the Messias, the Saviour of the world, gave distinctive marks that would enable all to recognise Him, writing, as it were by anticipation, His history, and describing fully and in detail all the circumstances of His life, of His birth, of the end of His mission, and of the wonderful deeds that He would perform in order to convince the world that He was the Lord, the desired of nations. They spoke of His sufferings, and His death, which would put an end to the sacrifices and priesthood of the old Law, and prove fatal to His own nation. Now, as all these circumstances have been literally fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, we must conclude that He is the Messias, the Prince of Peace, the Saviour Whom all nations expected. Let us, therefore, at this holy season prostrate ourselves before the infant Jesus and adore Him. Let us recognise in that tender Babe the Creator of the world, our Lord and our God. Let us never cease to sing His praises, and during this great feast let us frequently repeat the words of the heavenly host, of the angelic spirits: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of goodwill" (St. Luke ii. 14). AMEN.

XVI.

ON OUR DIVINE LORD.

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law."—GAL. iv. 4.

OUR LORD, beloved brethren, is true God, being as God equal to the Father in all things, and true man, having a body and soul, and being like unto us in all things, sin alone excepted. He was of our flesh and blood, and, like us, exposed to trials and sufferings, and death itself. God having decreed that our redemption should be the work of man, our Lord could not have redeemed us had He not taken our nature in its integrity. The body that the Word of God assumed was therefore a real and not a fantastical one. The words of our Lord Himself will convince us of the truth of this doctrine. When He appeared to His disciples at Jerusalem, on the very day of His resurrection, they were terrified and affrighted, supposing that they had seen a spirit: "And He said to them, Why are you troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? see My hands and feet, that it is I Myself: handle and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see Me to have" (St. Luke xxiv. 38, 39). The words that the Apostle St. Paul

addressed to the Philippians have the same meaning: "Who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man" (Phil. ii. 6, 7). St. John also expresses himself in terms equally clear: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (St. John i. 1, 14). That our Lord had a human soul is evident from Scripture and the teaching of the Fathers. Whilst He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane His soul was overwhelmed with grief, and He said to His Apostles: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death: stay you here and watch with Me" (St. Matt. xxvi. 38). St. Augustine remarks that He would not have been truly man had He not assumed a human soul, perfect in every sense: "Non esset homo perfectus, si vel anima carni, vel animæ ipsæ mens humana defuerit." Our Lord was also subject to all human miseries, sin alone excepted. He suffered from cold, hunger, and thirst, and also from the ingratitude of men. In the Garden of Gethsemane His sufferings were so great that His body was bathed in a sweat of blood. The contemplation of the miseries and pains that He was about to undergo, the thought of the black ingratitude of men, of the unbearable weight of their sins, and of the great multitude that would not avail themselves of His Passion and Death, so oppressed Him that His soul shuddered at the sight; and the agony which He

endured was so great that the Incarnate God was covered with a sweat of blood from head to foot—a thing unheard of before or since. "He fell upon His face, praying and saying, My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (St. Matt. xxvi. 39). We can, therefore, understand that Isaias should have called Him "a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity. . . . He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins . . . and by His bruises we are healed . . . and He hath borne the sins of many, and hath prayed for the transgressors" (Isaias liii. 3, 4, 12). Truly He suffered for our sins: "Who His own self," says St. Peter, "bore our sins in His body upon the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live to justice, by Whose stripes you were healed" (1 St. Peter ii. 24). He suffered in order to redeem us and save us, and to make us understand the infinite love His heavenly Father bore us. "For God so loved the world as to give His Only-Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting" (St. John iii. 16). St. Luke relates in the following words the manner in which this mystery was accomplished: "And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel being come in, said unto her, Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

Who having heard was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said to her, Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God: behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His Name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the most High: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father. And He shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said to the angel, How shall this be done, because I know not man? And the angel answering, said to her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And, therefore, also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her" (St. Luke i. 26-38). The moment Mary consented she conceived, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, in her virginal womb, the Son of God: "Et verbum caro factum est"—the Word was made man. A body was at once formed out of her most precious blood, and a soul perfect in intellect and wisdom was created, and the divine nature was united to both soul and body in the person of God the Son. This was not the work of man, but of God. "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee, and therefore also the Holy which shall be born

of thee shall be called the Son of God" (St. Luke i. 35). Mary is then truly the mother of God, the son whom she brought forth being the Son of the Most High. "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel" (Isaias vii. 14). These words of Isaias were fulfilled in Mary. She was announced by the prophet. In her womb the great mystery of the Incarnation was accomplished. She became a mother, and the mother of the Son of God—her virginity remaining intact. Hence we understand how it was that Elizabeth should have addressed her in these words: "And whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (St. Luke i. 43). Our own mothers, as a holy Father remarks, have no part in the creation of our souls, but still are truly our mothers, for in their wombs our bodies and souls are united. Thus Mary, although she did not beget the divine nature, is truly the mother of God, the divine person and human nature having been united in her womb, and the Son Whom she bore being the Son of God. "Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son. . . . And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (St. Luke i. 35, 36). Let us, beloved brethren, never cease to praise our Blessed Lady, and to thank God for having chosen her to be the mother of His Divine Son. What graces did He not bestow upon her in order to render her worthy of that supreme dignity to which He had raised her!

Let us imitate her in all things—her charity, her purity, and her resignation to the will of Heaven. In our trials and temptations, let us invoke her protection. Let us have confidence in her, and she will shield us against all our enemies—against a thousand dangers.

AMEN.

XVII.

ON THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD.

"Now Thou dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word, in peace. Because my eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples. A light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel. . . . And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary, His mother: Behold, this Child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted."—St. Luke ii. 29-34.

In these words, beloved brethren, the holy man Simeon gives utterance to the deep gratitude with which he was animated towards God for granting him the great happiness of beholding with mortal eyes the infant Jesus, that Infant that the prophets had announced, and that the whole world expected as their Redeemer and Liberator. He tells us that what the prophets had predicted was accomplished, and that the Child Jesus had come to enlighten the nations that were buried in darkness, in the errors of paganism. He had come to save Israel, but as His people would not receive Him, they were rejected, and their inheritance bestowed upon the Gentiles. In order that these words of the holy man Simeon may make a deep impression upon us, and that the coming

of Christ may be unto us a source of grace, let us consider for a few moments the mystery that the whole Catholic world is celebrating at present, and meditate for a short time on the motives that induced the Word of God, the Second Person of the Adorable Trinity, to become man, and to clothe Himself with our nature and all its infirmities, sin excepted.

Jesus, beloved brethren, took our nature in order to save us from sin and hell. Man could not blot out sin; he could not, if left to himself, appease the anger of God. Sin was, in a certain sense, an offence of infinite malice, being an offence against God Himself, so that man could not atone for it and obtain forgiveness at the hands of his heavenly Master. His works were altogether unworthy of God, being imperfect, and those of a sinful man. To offer to God an adequate reparation for the sins of the world it was necessary that the Word of God should become man, should assume our flesh, without ceasing to be God. As man He suffered, and as God He deified His sufferings, and rendered them worthy of the divinity. He thus appeased the Divine anger, having offered to His heavenly Father an atonement adequate, in every sense, to the injury done Him by fallen man.

But not only did the Word of God become flesh, He also clothed Himself with our nature and its infirmities, taking a body and soul in all things like ours. He might have taken our human nature as it was in Adam before the fall, free from pain and suffer-

ing, and endowed with immortality. Two reasons induced Him to take our nature, and to become as one of us. By taking a nature subject to suffering He proved to the world that the body that He had assumed was not a fantastical, but a real one. In the first ages of the Church several heretics maintained that our Lord was not in reality man, having assumed only a fantastical body. There would have been some support for this error, had not our Lord taken a body subject to cold, hunger, and thirst, and like ours in every sense, sin excepted. As He proved His Godhead by His miracles, by raising the dead to life, so He proved His humanity by His infirmities, by His sufferings, by death itself.

In Christ some works were merely human, some divine, some partly human and partly divine. His human works were those that He performed as man, when, for instance, He sat at table and partook of the food that was placed before Him. His divine works were those that He performed as God, such as the Creation. His miracles were partly human and partly divine, His sacred humanity being the instrument through which the Godhead performed them.

The second reason that induced our Lord to take our nature, with all its infirmities, is given by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Hebrews. It was in order to feel compassion for us. Do we not feel for those who are exposed to the same trials as ourselves? Therefore our Lord suffered as we do, in order to

have pity upon us, and to succour us when tried and persecuted. "For we have not," says the Apostle of the Gentiles, "a High Priest Who cannot have compassion on our infirmities; but One tempted in all things, like as we are, without sin" (Heb. iv. 15). Let us well understand, beloved brethren, that our Lord was tempted outwardly and not from within, and that He was free from all concupiscence of the flesh. Also that when He suffered in His soul grief, anger, and fear, He was perfectly master of these emotions, having freely allowed His sacred humanity to feel their effects. He commanded, and all the faculties of His soul obeyed His voice. Nor was He in the least subject to ignorance, disease, or condemned, as we are, to wage a perpetual war against the concupiscence of the flesh, against its irregular appetites.

Our Lord did not only take our nature, but He took it in a state of poverty and wretchedness. He was born of a poor woman, and in a stable at Bethlehem. Our Blessed Lady and St. Joseph, having come to be enrolled in the city of their ancestors, were obliged to take refuge in a cave, as there was no room for them in the inn. Why, beloved brethren, was our Lord born in a stable? He wanted to teach us, by His own example, the necessity of mortifying ourselves, and of detaching our affections from the things of this life. The Apostle St. John tells us that there are three great evils, namely, concupiscence of the flesh, concu-

piscence of the eyes, and pride of life. From the crib of Bethlehem, the Infant Jesus inculcates the necessity of mortifying the flesh, and of preferring the salvation of our immortal souls to all the treasures of the world. It was pride that caused man to fall. *Dii eritis:* these words seduced our first parents from the allegiance they owed their God. Deceived by the evil one, they tasted the forbidden fruit, and brought upon themselves and their descendants woes unutterable. Our Lord was, therefore, born in a state of extreme poverty, in order to teach us, by His example, the necessity of humility, of putting our trust in God, and of acknowledging His supreme dominion over all things.

The Child Jesus appeared in a state of poverty and misery in order to teach us another lesson. There is a great temptation to which we are all exposed. We are not unfrequently prevented by fear and cowardice from performing our most sacred duties. Why do we fear men? Is it not because we imagine that unless we bow down before them and betray our religion and our God, we shall be hated and persecuted? But if we trample under foot the good things of this life, its riches and honours, and value them as dung, what shall we care for the opinion of men, or whether we incur their hatred or not. Free from all earthly desires, strengthened in the school of adversity, we shall fear God, and know no other fear.

Let us this day, beloved brethren, begin the work of our salvation. Let us fight the good fight. We

have three enemies to contend with, namely, the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and pride of life. Let us mortify the works of the flesh; strengthened with the divine grace, we shall thoroughly master this mortal enemy. Let us eradicate from our hearts all unlawful desires, and conform ourselves in all things to the will of God. Let us humble ourselves, remembering that we are useless beings, whom God in His mercy has called into existence, whom He created for His honour and glory, and whom He can unmake, as a potter does a useless vase, the moment we have ceased to answer His purpose, and to conform ourselves to the decrees of His Divine Providence. Let us enter the stable of Bethlehem, and prostrate ourselves before the Infant Jesus. Let us adore Him. He is our God, and we should be proud to confess Him before the whole world. Men of the present day seem to have forgotten the innumerable favours He conferred upon fallen man. He found the world a desert, and changed it into a paradise. Idolatry and slavery had degraded the whole face of the earth. Man adored the beasts of the field and the monsters of his own creation. Jesus came, and the altars of false gods fell tottering to the ground. Slavery had brutalized the whole human race. The image of God was almost obliterated. A Saviour appeared, and with the stroke of His magic wand galvanized that huge carcass that had for years lain grovelling on the earth, a prey to foul corruption.

"Lumen ad revelationem gentium, et gloriam plebis Israel." He came to enlighten the world that sat in darkness, and to direct the heart of man heavenwards, towards the throne of the living God. He came to redeem us, to reconcile us with God, to teach us the way to heaven, to point out the road that leadeth infallibly thereto. "Enter ye in," Christ says, "at the narrow gate, for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat. But narrow is the gate, and strait is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there are that find it" (St. Matt. vii. 13, 14). In which path have we walked up to the present? Let us to-day ask ourselves this question, having impressed upon us the words of Simeon, who tells us that Christ has come for the fall and resurrection of many, and for a sign that shall be contradicted, that is to say, for the salvation of those who acknowledge Him as their Lord and Master, who keep His commandments; for the ruin of those who, although Catholic in name, are in reality followers of the devil, the world, and the flesh. "And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother: Behold, this Child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted" (St. Luke ii. 34).

AMEN.

XVIII.

ON THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION.

"For this day is born to you a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord in the City of David."—St. Luke ii. 11.

Our Lord came to save the world and to reconcile us with God. The sin of our first parents entailed upon them and their descendants unutterable woe, the loss of their inheritance, and of God's friendship, and of innumerable graces that would have enabled them to persevere in His divine love until they had rendered themselves worthy of that Heaven for which they had been created. Having incurred by their rebellion God's anger, and having lost all the supernatural gifts with which their souls had been adorned, they were banished from the Divine presence and condemned to everlasting perdition. Not only did they suffer the loss of all supernatural graces, but their natural faculties were also enfeebled, and the will became prone to evil, the lower appetites rising in rebellion against the dictates of reason. This loss would have been irretrievable had not God in His mercy interfered. "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head" (Gen. iii. 15). This promise,

which God made the very day He cursed the infernal serpent, has been fulfilled; "for God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting" (St. John iii. 16).

The malice of sin depends especially upon the dignity of the person offended, and the distance that separates the injured person from the one that has given offence. An injurious word spoken to a king is more offensive than if addressed to an equal. As the distance that separates man from God is infinite, the malice of sin must be, in a certain sense, infinite. Sinful man could not atone for his sins. His most praiseworthy actions could not satisfy the divine justice and reconcile him with Heaven. For this, it was necessary that the Word should become flesh, and appease by His sufferings and death the anger of God. Jesus suffered as man, and as God He gave to His sufferings an infinite value. He offered to His heavenly Father an adequate satisfaction for the sins of the world, and established between God and fallen man an eternal peace, the impassable gulf that had separated Heaven from earth being bridged over.

In Jesus Christ there are two distinct natures, but one Divine Person, the person of God the Son. The union that exists between the two natures in Jesus Christ is not simply a moral but a personal one, and is called hypostatical, the divine and human nature being so intimately united that they form but one person, the person of God the Son. Although the

human nature in Christ remains whole and intact, it has no personality of its own, being intimately united to the Divine Person, so that the actions that emanate from His sacred humanity are the actions of a Divine Person. The actions of our Divine Lord being those of an incarnate God, and being of an infinite value, one single one would have been sufficient to restore us to our lost inheritance. But Christ suffered so much in order that we might understand the great love His Heavenly Father had for each one of us. "For God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting" (St. John iii. 16).

It is of faith that there are two distinct natures in Jesus Christ, for He is God and man, the divine and human nature being hypostatically united in the person of God the Son. He is true God and true man: for "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant; being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man" (Phil. ii. 6, 7). These words of the Apostle prove that our Divine Lord, who was consubstantial with the Father, having His form and His substance, became man, taking our form and our substance, clothing Himself with our humanity. The same Divine Person was God and man; as God He was equal to the Father, and as man less than the Father. "I and the Father are one" (St. John x. 30). "For the Father is greater

than I" (St. John xiv. 28). All this is a mystery, and quite above our comprehension, but we believe it on the authority of God and the testimony of Holy Church.

A priest of Alexandria, Arius by name, was one of the first to deny the divinity of Christ. The Fathers who had assembled at Nice in 325 to examine the doctrine of this heretic, maintained the divinity of the Word of God, declaring that He was equal to the Father in all things, of the same nature, of the same essence, in fact, consubstantial with the Father. Like the word "transubstantiation" in a later age, the word "consubstantial" gave mortal offence to the followers of Arius; but the doctrine that it expressed —namely, the Divinity of Christ, as the holy Fathers of the Council of Nice proved by Scripture and tradition—is contained in the deposit of faith and revealed by God.

Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, denied, in the fifth century, the mystery of the Incarnation. According to this heresiarch, there are in Christ, not only two natures, but two distinct persons. The divine and human nature are united morally and not hypostatically, and the Word dwelleth in Christ as in a temple. Mary is not therefore the mother of God, but of the man Christ. This doctrine St. Cyril of Alexandria refuted in the following terms: "I am astonished how any Christian can call in question the divine maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or doubt whether she is to be styled the 'Mother of God.' For

if our Lord Jesus Christ is God—and that He is the Scriptures clearly teach—the Holy Virgin, His mother who brought Him forth, must consequently be the mother of God. This the Apostles taught, this all our predecessors have delivered to us, this is the Catholic doctrine and the belief of Christ's Church; not that the Divine Word had a beginning from Mary, but that in her was formed a pure body, animated with a rational soul, to which the Word was hypostatically united, and so became man in one and the same Divine Person: thus in the order of nature, a mother who bears a son is truly called the mother of a man, although she only concurs in the formation of his body, and has no part in the creation of his soul." Nestorius was condemned by the Fathers of the Council of Ephesus, held in 431. They maintained that Mary was the mother of God, the Son whom she brought forth being God the Son. According to the Council, there are two natures in Christ, but only one Divine Person, the person of God the Son. As the rational soul and flesh are one man, so the divine and human nature in Christ are one person. God and man is one Christ. The decree of Ephesus was received with loud shouts of joy by the inhabitants of that city, who rejoiced at not having been robbed of that faith which they had inherited from their forefathers.

Eutyches, abbot of a monastery near Constantinople, fell into a grievous error concerning this mystery. To refute Nestorius he maintained that

there is not only one person in Christ, but one nature, the human having been absorbed by the divine nature, like a drop of water that is lost in the ocean. The human nature having disappeared, Christ did not suffer in reality, but only in appearance, for the Godhead could not suffer. This doctrine, which is fatal to the mystery of the Incarnation and redemption, was condemned by the Council of Chalcedon in 451. The Fathers unanimously declared that, to be orthodox, we must confess one only Jesus Christ, true God and true man, consubstantial with the Father according to His divinity, and consubstantial with us according to His humanity, so that He perfectly possessed two distinct natures: the one Divine, which He had had from all eternity; the other human, which He received in the womb of Mary, His virgin mother, both united in one and the self-same person, which is the Second Person of the Most Blessed Trinity. Pope Leo's letter to Flavian on this subject having been read at this Council, the Fathers were so pleased with the manner in which the illustrious Pontiff gave utterance to the Catholic doctrine that they cried out: "This is the doctrine of our forefathers; this is the doctrine of the Apostles. It is Peter himself who has spoken by the mouth of Leo."

Monothelitism is another error, condemned in the sixth General Council held at Constantinople in 680. Monothelites maintained that there is only one will and one operation in Christ. In Christ there are two wills and two operations, a divine and a human one.

His human will was certainly subject to His divine will, and always willed one and the same thing. "We define," said the Fathers of the Council, "that in Jesus Christ there are two natural wills and two natural operations, and we forbid the contrary to be taught." This doctrine we are bound to profess and to hand down to our children pure and intact.

AMEN.

XIX.

ON THE APPARITIONS OF OUR DIVINE LORD.

"For I know that you seek Jesus Who was crucified; He is not here, for He is risen as He said."—St. Matt. xxviii. 5, 6.

Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Salome, and the other Mary came to the sepulchre early in the morning on the first day of the week, carrying with them spices to embalm the body of our Divine Lord. And they found the stone rolled away and the sepulchre empty, and being much perplexed, they saw two young men in shining garments, who said unto them: Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here. He is risen; remember how He spoke unto you when He was in Galilee, saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinners, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. Tell His disciples that He has risen, and that He will meet them in Galilee. They ran and told His disciples. Peter and John came to the sepulchre, and having seen the linen cloths in which the body of our Lord had been wrapped, they departed, wondering at what had taken place. "For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. . . . But Mary stood at

the sepulchre without, weeping. Now, as she was weeping she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre, and she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been laid. They say to her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith to them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him. When she had thus said, she turned herself back and saw Jesus standing, and she knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith to her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, thinking it was the gardener, said to Him, Sir, if Thou hast taken Him hence, tell me where Thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away. Jesus saith to her, Mary. She, turning, saith to Him, Rabboni (which is to say, Master). Jesus saith to her, Do not touch Me, for I am not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them: I ascend to My Father and to your Father, to My God and your God" (St. John xx. 9-17). Mary told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken those things unto her. Mary Magdalene was favoured with the first apparition; for Christ, Who had come to save the fallen, wished to impress upon us the efficacy of penance. As the women went to inform the disciples of the vision they had had, "behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. But they came up and took hold of His feet and adored Him. Then Jesus said to them: Fear not: go, tell My brethren that they go into Galilee; there they shall see Me"

(St. Matt. xxviii. 9, 10). The disciples believed not St. Mary Magdalene and the other women, imagining that they were deceived, and that their words were nothing better than idle tales. They refused even to believe the disciples of Emmaus. This apparition, which took place on the first day of the week, on the day that Jesus had risen from the grave, is related by St. Luke in these words: "And, behold, two of them went the same day to a town which was sixty furlongs from Jerusalem, named Emmaus. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass that while they talked and reasoned with themselves, Jesus Himself, also drawing near, went with them. But their eyes were held that they should not know Him. And He said to them, What are these discourses that you hold one with another as you walk, and are sad? And the one of them whose name was Cleophas answering, said to Him: Art Thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that have been done there in these days: To whom He said, What things? And they said: Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, Who was a Prophet, mighty in work and word before God and all the people; and how our chief priests and princes delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we hoped that it was He that should have redeemed Israel: and now, besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company affrighted us, who before it was light were at the

sepulchre: and not finding His body, came, saying that they had also a vision of angels, who say that He is alive. And some of our people went to the sepulchre, and found it so as the women had said; but Him they found not. Then He said to them, O foolish and slow of heart to believe in all which the prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things that were concerning Him. And they drew nigh to the town, whither they were going, and He made as though He would go farther; but they constrained Him, saying, Stay with us, because it is towards evening, and the day is now far spent. And He went in with them. And it came to pass whilst He was at the table with them, He took bread and blessed, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him, and He vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Was not our heart burning within us, whilst He spoke in the way, and opened to us the Scriptures!" (St. Luke xxiv. 13-32). The Evangelist alludes also to the fifth apparition of our Divine Lord. It took place in Jerusalem, and in the presence of His disciples. After having seen their dead Master, the disciples of Emmaus returned to Jerusalem, and told Peter and the other Apostles that they had seen Jesus. "Now, whilst they were speaking these things, Jesus stood in the midst of them, and saith to them, Peace be to

you. . . . But they were troubled and frighted, supposed that they saw a spirit. And He said unto them, Why are ye troubled? . . . see My hands and feet; that it is I Myself, handle and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as you see Me to have. And when He had said this, He shewed them His hands and feet: but while they yet believed not and wondered for joy, He said, Have you here anything to eat? And they offered Him a piece of a broiled fish, and a honeycomb. And when He had eaten before them, taking the remains, He gave to them. And He said to them, These are the words which I spoke to you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me. Then He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scripture, and He said to them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead the third day, and that penance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name unto all nations, beginning at Jerusalem; and you are witnesses of these things. And I send the promise of My Father upon you; but stay you in the city till you be endued with power from on high" (St. John xxiv. 36-49). It was on this occasion that He gave them the power of forgiving sins. "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you." When He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them:

and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (St. John xx. 21-23). The sixth vision is mentioned by St. John the Evangelist: "Now Thomas, one of the twelve who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples, therefore, said to him, We have seen the Lord; but he said to them, Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe. And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them, Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be to you. Then He saith to Thomas, Put in thy finger hither, and see My hands; and bring hither thy hand, and put it into My side, and be not faithless but believing. . . . Many other signs also did Jesus in the sight of His disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you may have life in His Name" (St. John xx. 24-31). The testimony of St. Thomas, who refused to believe the mystery of the Resurrection on the authority of the other Apostles, is of the greatest moment. He would not believe until he had satisfied his own eyes that Jesus had risen from the grave, and then prostrating himself at the feet of Jesus, he cried out: "My Lord and my God!" (St. John xx. 28). Christ showed Himself a seventh time at the sea of Tiberias. Simon and some other disciples went a-fishing, and passed the night without

catching one single fish. "But when the morning was come, Jesus stood on the shore, yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus therefore said to them, Children, have you any meat? They answered Him, No. He saith to them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and you shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes; that disciple, therefore, whom Jesus loved said to Peter, It is the Lord. Simon Peter, when he heard that it was the Lord, girt his coat about him (for he was naked), and cast himself into the sea; but the other disciples came in the ship, dragging the net with fishes. As soon, then, as they came to land, they saw hot coals lying, and a fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith to them, Bring hither of the fishes which you have now caught. Simon Peter went up and drew the net to land, full of great fishes, one hundred and fifty-three. . . . Jesus saith to them, Come and dine: and none of them who were at meat durst ask Him, Who art Thou? knowing that it was the Lord" (St John xxi. 4-12). It was then that Jesus conferred upon St. Peter jurisdiction over the universal Church, and entrusted him and his successors with the care of the lambs and the sheep, of bishops and priests, and of all members of their flocks: "When, therefore, they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith to Him, Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him, Feed My lambs. He saith to him again, Simon, son of John, lovest thou

Me? He saith to Him, Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him, Feed My lambs. He said to him a third time, Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved because He had said to him the third time, Lovest thou Me? and he said to Him, Lord, Thou knowest all things: Thou knowest that I love Thee. He said to him, Feed My sheep" (St. John xxi. 15-17).

Our Lord appeared also to His disciples and five hundred on a mountain in Galilee, where He had appointed to see them: "And seeing Him, they adored, but some doubted. And Jesus, coming, spoke to them, saying, All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth; going therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and, behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (St. Matt. xxviii. 17-20). Jesus provided for the unity and indefectibility of the faith by commanding His Apostles to teach all truths—everything that He had taught Himself—by promising to be with them always until the end, and by placing over them a pontiff endowed with the gift of infallibility in faith and morals. "But I have prayed for thee," said He, addressing Peter, "that thy faith fail not" (St. Luke xxii. 12). "More than eighteen hundred years," says a Catholic writer, "have elapsed since Jesus Christ founded His Church, and yet we see it remaining unchanged until the present day.

The Church alone has stood firm, unaltered, unshaken, amidst all the changes and revolutions of the world. The deposit of faith confided to the Apostles has been preserved intact. We believe now all the same doctrines which were announced by Jesus Christ and His Apostles; we are, therefore, members of His true Church militant on earth, and we hope to pass one day into the Church triumphant in Heaven."

AMEN.

XX.

ON THE INCARNATE SON OF GOD.

"Not as I will, but as Thou wilt."—St. Matt. xxvi. 39.

It is of faith, beloved brethren, that there is but one person in Jesus Christ There are two distinct natures, but one Divine Person, the human nature having no personality of its own. This doctrine is founded on Scripture and tradition. To quote one passage from St. Paul will be sufficient for our purpose. In his Epistle to the Philippians the Apostle inculcates this doctrine in these words: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant. . . . He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death" (Phil. ii. 6-8). The Apostle tells the Philippians that the same Christ was God and man, and that God, Who was made man, debased and humbled Himself unto the death of the Cross. St. John teaches the same doctrine. "The Word," says the Apostle, "was God . . . and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (St. John i. 1, 14). The same Person was, therefore, God and man, the divine and human nature being united in one Person, in that of God the Son. This same Person is frequently

called in Scripture God and man, human and divine attributes being ascribed to the same individual. The same person is said to be on earth and in heaven, "and no man hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended from heaven, the Son of Man, Who is in heaven" (St. John iii. 13). This doctrine Holy Church has never ceased to teach. It is expressed in all her Creeds. The Nicene Creed that we say at Mass contains it in the clearest terms possible. "I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten, not made, consubstantial to the Father, by Whom all things were made, Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was Incarnate, by the Holy Ghost, of the Virgin Mary, and was made man." The same Divine Person that was begotten of the Father, being of the same substance as the Father, was made man, was Incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and suffered and died for us upon the Cross. "Jesus Christ, the Son of God," says St. Augustine, "is God and man; God before all Ages, and man in time; God, for He was the Word of God, and the Word was God; and man, for the Word was made flesh, the divine and human nature having been hypostatically united." The teaching of Nestorius is altogether destructive of the mystery of the Incarnation. Our Catechism tells us that God became man to redeem us from sin and hell. Sin being an offence against God, of an infinite malice, man, if left to himself, could not offer to God an adequate reparation; he could not satisfy the Divine justice. The

works of man being imperfect, it was impossible for him to propitiate the Almighty. On the other hand, as the Divinity could not suffer, to appease the wrath of heaven, it was necessary that the Son of God, the Second Person of the Adorable Trinity, should assume our nature, should become man without ceasing to be God, and by His sufferings and death, atone for our sins, and reconcile us with His heavenly Father. There being in Christ two distinct natures—the divine and human—subsisting in the person of God the Son, all His actions, even those that proceeded from His sacred Humanity, were Divine and of infinite value, for they were the actions of a divine person. His sufferings were, therefore, of infinite value, being the sufferings of God Incarnate. Thus an adequate atonement was made to Heaven for the sins of the human race, and fallen man was once more admitted into the presence and friendship of the Almighty. The anger of God was appeased, and perpetual peace established between heaven and earth. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of goodwill" (St. Luke ii. 14).

In Christ there are two distinct natures, the nature of God and the nature of man. These two natures are united, but not confounded, each nature remaining, after being united hypostatically, whole and intact. In becoming man, the Son did not cease to be God. He must of necessity have the Divine nature, otherwise He would not be God; and being truly man, He must have our nature, and be like us

in all things, sin excepted. This doctrine is thus expressed by the Apostle St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an Apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God, which He had promised before by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, concerning His Son, Who was made to Him of the seed of David according to the flesh, Who was predestinated the Son of God in power, according to the Spirit of Sanctification, by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead" (Rom. i. 1-4). Therefore, according to the Apostle, the same Christ Who was of the seed of David according to the flesh was the Son of God, and proved His omnipotence, His Divine nature, by His miracles, and especially by His resurrection from the dead. Thus we see He had two distinct natures—the Divine, made manifest by His miracles, and the human; for He was truly man, having descended, according to the flesh, from the Royal House of David. Eutyches, beloved brethren, maintained that the human nature which the Word of God had assumed was absorbed by the Divinity, as a drop of honey is lost in the ocean, or sucked up by the heat of the sun. Had this been the case, it would have been impossible for Christ to suffer and atone for our sins, and the mystery of the Incarnation would have proved useless, would have been a perfect failure. Flavian, Bishop of Constantinople, cited Eutyches before the Ecclesiastical Council that was being held in that city. The heresiarch, far from retracting, tried to justify himself

in these words: "I believe," said Eutyches, "that there existed two natures before the Incarnation, but after the union there was only one." Being condemned by the Synod, he appealed to Rome. The Pope, who had been fully informed of the whole proceedings, ratified the sentence of the Synod, and ordered the heresiarch to retract. Meantime, the Bishop of Alexandria took part with Eutyches, and having assembled at Ephesus all those who were partial to the heretic, condemned the orthodox Flavian and his faithful followers. The holy Bishop was deposed, and sent into exile for having appealed to Rome. However, at the General Council of Chalcedon, held in 451, truth prevailed. This baneful heresy was condemned, and Eutyches banished from Constantinople. We see, beloved brethren, that, in the fifth century bishops and priests appealed to Rome in their troubles, and recognised the Roman Pontiffs as the supreme heads of the Church.

There being in Christ these two distinct natures hypostatically united—the one Divine, and the other human—it follows that His operations were also Divine and human. The miracles that He performed were Divine operations, and proved His Godhead; and to prove that He was man He lived upon earth the life of an ordinary mortal. "John," said our Divine Lord, "came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say he hath a devil. The Son of Man is come eating and drinking; and you say, Behold a man that is a glutton and a drinker of wine, a friend

of publicans and sinners" (St. Luke vii. 33, 34). Although the human was perfectly obedient to the Divine will, it remained, nevertheless, altogether intact. The prayer that our Blessed Lord offered up in the Garden of Gethsemane proves this assertion. "And going a little further, He fell upon His face, praying, and saying—My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me, nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (St. Matt. xxvi. 39). The will referred to here must have been His human will; for as God His will was that of His heavenly Father. The same thing is found in St. John. "Because," says Christ, "I came down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (St. John vi. 38). Christ's will was, therefore, distinct from His Father's will, and as this could not have been His Divine, it must have been His human, will. St. Thomas teaches this doctrine in the following terms: "The Son of God, in becoming man, took our humanity perfect in every sense. The human nature that He assumed being perfect, He must have had a human will, which is one of the constitutive parts of our nature."

AMEN.

XXI.

ON THE INFALLIBLE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

"Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and, behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."—St. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

Our Divine Lord, beloved brethren, sent His Apostles to preach the Gospel to the whole world, promising to be with them until the end of time. They were to preach the Gospel in its integrity, and announce unto men all the truths they had received from their Divine Master. To enable His Apostles to perform this duty, Christ promised to abide with them, and to send the Paraclete, who would teach them all truth. This grace having been granted for the benefit of the universal Church, the pastors of the present day must possess it; they must be prevented by God from teaching error and leading men astray. Had not God established a society, an infallible Church, to guide us heavenwards, we should remain uncertain concerning what the Lord did in reality teach, and become the dupes of the first impostor who desired to deceive us. To protect us against error, Christ founded a Church and bestowed upon it supreme authority in matters of

religion. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father Who is in heaven. And I say to thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (St. Matt. xvi. 17, 18).

It is only the infallible authority of the Church that can guarantee us against all error. Left to ourselves, we could never be sure that the interpretation that we put upon Holy Scripture was the right one, or that the Bible itself was the Word of God. The infallible Word of God can only be infallible unto us inasmuch as we receive it from an infallible authority. The Word of God can have only one true meaning, and how are we to know that we have seized it? Protestants interpret the Bible in a thousand different ways, and have recourse to the Word of God to prove opinions that are diametrically opposed to one another. This sad state of things can only be avoided by having recourse in all our doubts to the infallible authority of the Church. She alone can guide us and prevent our being tossed about by every wind of doctrine. In the ordinary affairs of life, beloved brethren, we have recourse to the advice of those who are better informed than ourselves. In our law courts do we not appeal to the judges of the land for a decision on matters of some moment? They are the interpreters of the law, they give life to the letter that is in itself dead. Neither can the inspired Word of God speak for itself. It

requires an interpreter, and that interpreter must be infallible, if we are to possess without any misgiving, without the possibility of a doubt, the true and genuine sense of Holy Writ. Private interpretation is destructive to all religion. You can scarcely, beloved brethren, find two Protestants who understand the Bible alike. They are not only divided about the sense of passages that are of little moment, but about the interpretation of those that are quite fundamental. The words that our Lord used when He instituted the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar are, in the eyes of some Protestants, quite sufficient to prove the Real Presence. If you believe others, they prove nothing of the kind, having only a figurative sense, or meaning, that our Lord is virtually present on our altars, and not in reality. To prove the Divinity of Christ, some appeal to Scripture and quote the words in the Gospel of St. John: "I and the Father are One" (St. John x. 30); others, who deny the Godhead of our Divine Lord, have also recourse to the Bible in order to substantiate their teaching. They appeal to the words in St. John, where Christ says that "the Father is greater than I" (St. John xiv. 28), and by putting a false construction upon this passage, which means that Christ as a man was inferior to the Father, they try to persuade men that our Lord was merely man. As private interpretation must in the end prove fatal to Christianity, it cannot have been the means instituted by Christ for the propagation of the Gospel and the

salvation of men. Besides, hundreds and thousands who cannot read—and in the first ages of the Church few could read—would never have known the eternal truths that our Lord came to announce, had the Bible been the only means of acquiring the knowledge thereof; and those who can read, are they sure that they understand the Bible rightly? Are they sure that it is the Word of God at all? St. Peter himself tells us that there are some men who wrest the Scripture to their own destruction, falsely interpreting the revealed Word of God. Are they not of those? Yes, beloved brethren, private interpretation is fatal to all revealed truth and destructive to Christianity. The Catholic Church, having been entrusted by her Divine Founder with the deposit of Faith, can alone interpret the Bible without fear of falling into error. She is the guardian of all revealed truth. She existed before the New Testament was written, and would continue to exist were the whole of the Bible to disappear. Of course this is a thing impossible; for one of her duties is to hand down to posterity the Word of God whole and intact; and this duty she will never cease to fulfil, receiving as she does from her Divine Founder the grace that enables her to remain faithful until the end to her heavenly mission.

When our Lord sent His Apostles to announce the Gospel, He did not order them to carry Bibles with them to be circulated amongst heathen nations; He told them to preach by word of mouth—"ite docete omnes gentes"—"going, therefore, teach ye all

nations" (St. Matt. xxviii. 19). To conform themselves to the instructions and example of their Master, the Apostles preached in every city, and only wrote, as it were, by accident, to encourage Christians to suffer for Christ, and to persevere or to enlighten them on certain truths that had been denied by the heretics of the day. They first converted nations, and then wrote to exhort them to remain firm in the faith that they had received from them by word of mouth. This example the Church has always followed, sending, in every age, missionaries to announce the Gospel and to preach the eternal truths of salvation to heathen nations. These nations embrace the faith because they know that it is taught by ministers of a Church that cannot err, being the pillar and ground of truth, and that the Faith that they receive has been published everywhere, and has converted the nations of the habitable globe.

AMEN.

XXII.

ON OUR DIVINE LORD.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."—St. John i. 1.

The Word, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, the splendour of the Father, His perfect image, was from the beginning, from all eternity. When we consider anything attentively, its image is reproduced in our minds. Thus the Father has a perfect conception of His Divine essence and attributes: but this conception, this image, is a distinct person from the Father, His Word, His eternal Son, Who is equal to Him in all things.

"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (St. John i. 14). The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity became man, and assumed our nature, taking a body and a soul like ours. "And the angel said to her, Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High. . . . The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: and therefore

also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (St. Luke i. 30-35).

Jesus, Who was truly the Incarnate Son of God, alludes not unfrequently to His Divinity. When Nicodemus came to Him by night to be instructed, saying, "Rabbi, we know that Thou art come a Teacher from God: for no man can do these signs which Thou dost, unless God be with him" (St. John iii. 2), our Lord answered in these words: "If I have spoken to you earthly things, and you believe not, how will you believe if I shall speak to you heavenly things? And no man hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended from heaven, the Son of man, Who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting. For God so loved the world, as to give His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting" (St. John iii. 12-16). "Abraham your father," said Jesus, answering the Jews who had treated Him with contempt, "rejoiced that he might see My day: he saw it and was glad" (St. John viii. 56). And as the people said unto Him, that, not being fifty years old, He could not have seen Abraham, He answered: "Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am" (St. John viii. 58). He proclaimed Himself the eternal God, and on that account the Jews took up stones to cast them at Him. During the feast of the dedication Our Lord happened

to be in the Temple when the Jews came and said to Him: "How long dost Thou hold our souls in suspense? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I speak to you, and you believe not. The works that I do in the name of My Father, they give testimony of Me. . . . My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them life everlasting, and they shall not perish for ever. . . . That which My Father hath given Me is greater than all. . . . I and the Father are One", (St. John x. 24-30). Here our Lord speaks plainly; He says that He is of the same Divine nature as the Father, one with Him. Therefore, because He said that He was God, the Jews were scandalized and wished to stone Him. "Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from My Father, for which of those works do you stone Me? The Jews answered Him, For a good work we stone Thee not, but for blasphemy, and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God" (St. John x. 32, 33). "If I do not the works of My Father," said Jesus, "believe Me not; but if I do, though you will not believe Me, believe the works: that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father" (St. John x. 37, 38). This teaching was so offensive to the Pharisees that they determined to kill our Divine Lord, so that He was obliged to fly and pass the Jordan "into that place where John was baptized first" (St. John x. 40), where He remained until He was informed of the illness of His friend Lazarus.

When He arrived at Bethany, Lazarus had been already four days in the tomb. Having come to the grave, He told them to take away the stone, and "Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith to Him, Lord, by this time he stinketh; for he is now of four days. Jesus saith to her, Did I not say to thee, that if thou believe, thou shalt see the glory of God? . . . When He had said these things" (having prayed to His heavenly Father), "He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And presently he that had been dead came forth, bound feet and hands with winding bands, and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus said to them, Loose him and let him go" (St. John xi. 39-44). This miracle convinced a great number, and henceforth many believed in Jesus; but the Pharisees were all the more embittered against Him, the high priest having declared that it was expedient that He should die, so that the whole nation should not perish. Miracles, beloved brethren, will not always convert the reprobate, those unfortunate sinners who are bent upon their own destruction. "And no one," says our Lord, "knoweth the Son but the Father, neither doth any man know the Father but the Son, and He to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him" (St. Matt. xi. 27). Miracles alone will not convert us: the grace of God is necessary—that grace that touches our hearts, and induces us to prostrate ourselves at the feet of Jesus.

We read in St. Matthew that John, having heard in prison of the works of Christ, sent two of his

disciples to inquire Who He was. "Art Thou He that art to come, or look we for another? And Jesus making answer said to them: Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the Gospel preached to them" (St. Matt. xi. 3-5). St. John the Baptist had no misgivings about Christ or His Divine mission, having declared upon several occasions that He was the Messiah, the Son of God, Who had come to take away the sins of the world; but he sent his disciples to Jesus hoping that our Lord would convince them, and induce them to follow Him, as soon as their Master had been put to death. To conform to the holy desires of the Baptist, Jesus worked the most wonderful miracles in the presence of His disciples, fulfilling at the same time in His Divine Person the predictions of the prophet Isaias, and thus proving not only by His miracles, but by the accomplishment of the prophecies, that He was the Messiah, the desired of nations, the Incarnate Son of God. "Say to the faint-hearted, Take courage, and fear not; behold your God will bring the revenge of recompense: God Himself will come, and will save you. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall be free" (Isa. xxxv. 4-6).

When the Jews reproved Jesus for having cured, on the Sabbath, the man who had been ill eight-

and-thirty years, He answered them: "My Father worketh until now, and I work; thereupon therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He did not only break the Sabbath, but also said God was His Father, making Himself equal to God. Then Jesus answered and said to them: Amen, amen, I say unto you, the Son cannot do anything of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing, for what things soever He doth, these the Son also doth in like manner. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things which Himself doth: and greater works than these will He show Him, that you may wonder. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and giveth life, so the Son also giveth life to whom He will. For neither doth the Father judge any man, but hath given all judgment to the Son. That all men may honour the Son, as they honour the Father. He who honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father Who hath sent Him" (St. John v. 17-23).

Christ worked miracles, not like Peter, in another's name, but in His own. "And behold, a leper came and adored Him, saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean; and Jesus stretched forth His hand, touched him, saying, I will, be thou made clean, and forthwith his leprosy was cleansed" (St. Matt. viii. 2, 3). Jesus being one day in Capharnaum, they brought to Him a man sick of the palsy, and "seeing their faith," our Lord "said to the man sick of the palsy, Be of good heart, son; thy sins are forgiven thee. And, behold, some of the Scribes said

within themselves, He blasphemeth, and Jesus, seeing their thoughts, said, Why do you think evil in your hearts? Whether is easier to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk. But that you may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, then said He to the man sick of the palsy, Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house. And he arose and went into his house" (St. Matt. ix. 2-7). As the Pharisees were scandalized at Jesus for having told the paralytic that his sins were forgiven, declaring that God alone could forgive sins, our Divine Lord confessed that such power belonged to God alone; and to prove that He had that power and was God, He addressed the man sick of the palsy, crying out: "Take up thy bed and go into thy house. And he arose and went into his house" (St. Matt. ix. 6, 7). At this holy season, let us not forget, beloved brethren, that the Child Whose birth we celebrate is the Incarnate Son of God, that as God He existed from all eternity, being equal to the Father in all things. He came to redeem and save us, to reconcile us with His heavenly Father, and restore unto each one of us our lost inheritance. Let us prostrate ourselves before the Infant Jesus, let us adore Him, having impressed upon our minds the words in which the angel addressed the shepherds when he announced the birth of our Lord: "Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people. For this day is born to you a Saviour, Who is Christ the Lord" (St. Luke ii. 10, 11). AMEN.

XXIII.

ON THE MOTIVES OF CREDIBILITY.

"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first and to the Greek."—Rom. i. 16.

The motives, beloved brethren, that induce us to accept the teaching of our Divine Lord are numerous indeed. The first that attract our attention are His miracles. When St. John the Baptist sent his disciples to inquire whether Jesus was the Messiah, our Divine Lord said unto them, "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them" (St. Matt. xi. 4, 5). Jesus never ceased to appeal to His miracles, and to tell the Jews that the works that He did proved His Divine mission. "The works that I do in the name of My Father, they give testimony of Me" (St. John x. 25). The one that He appealed to above all others was His glorious resurrection from the dead. "An evil and adulterous generation," said Jesus, "seeketh a sign, and a sign shall not be given it but the sign of Jonas the Prophet. For as Jonas was in the

whale's belly three days and three nights, so shall the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights" (St. Matt. xii. 39, 40). Also, when the Jews asked Jesus to give them a sign and to justify Himself for having driven the sheep and oxen out of the temple, and upset the tables of the money-changers, He appealed once more to His resurrection, saying: "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up. The Jews then said, Six and forty years was this Temple in building, and wilt Thou raise it up in three days? But He spoke of the temple of His body. When, therefore, He was risen again from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had said" (St. John ii. 19-22).

The evidence of this miracle, beloved brethren, is incontestable. Our Lord appeared after His resurrection to His Apostles, His disciples, and to five hundred of His brethren. The multitude that gave up all to follow Jesus also witness unto the truth of this Divine mystery. His enemies themselves were obliged to confess that He had risen from the dead. Also, the precautions that the Pharisees took to prevent all deception, sealing the stone, and placing a body of soldiers to guard the tomb, prove how impossible it was for the Apostles, had they willed it, to deceive us; but why should they have attempted to practise deception upon their countrymen? Had not Jesus risen from the dead, they must have known

that He had led them astray, and that His doctrine was false. They, therefore, would have been the first to denounce Him. Their own interest would have induced them to take this step. Men who betrayed their Master and fled the moment He was arrested, although they were then under the spell of His powerful influence, could not be expected to die for Him after having found out that He was nothing but a vile impostor. Besides, the Apostles had lost all faith in Christ's resurrection, and would have never preached it, had not this event been brought home to them by evidence so great that resistance on their part was impossible. They preached on all occasions Jesus risen from the dead, and to put the seal of authenticity to their doctrine, they appealed to Heaven for a miracle, and forthwith the voice of God was heard proclaiming Jesus to be His only begotten Son.

Another motive that induces us to believe is the holiness of the doctrine that Jesus announced. In the Sermon on the Mount, our Divine Lord exhorts all His followers to holiness and perfection. We are invited to love, not only our neighbour, but our enemies. "You have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thy enemy. But I say to you, Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you" (St. Matt. v. 43, 44). We must avoid not only bad actions, but the very thought of sin. "You have heard that it was said to them of

old, Thou shalt not commit adultery; but I say to you that whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery with her in his heart" (St. Matt. v. 27, 28). And again, "You have heard that it was said to them of old, Thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment; but I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment" (St. Matt. v. 21, 22). Jesus exhorts us to pray, to mortify and detach ourselves from earthly things. "Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth, where the rust and the moth consume, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither the rust nor moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through and steal. For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also" (St. Matt. vi. 19-21). Our Lord also tells us that we must have full confidence in His heavenly Father: "Therefore I say to you, Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat, and the body more than the raiment? Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor do they reap, nor gather into barns, and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they? And which of you, by taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit? And for raiment why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they labour not, neither do they spin: and yet I say to you, that not even

Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. And if the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven God doth so clothe, how much more you, O ye of little faith! Be not solicitous, therefore, saying, What shall we eat, or What shall we drink, or Wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathen seek; for your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye therefore first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you" (St. Matt. vi. 25-33). One day, a Pharisee having asked our Divine Lord which was the greatest commandment, Jesus answered and said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and thy neighbour as thyself" (St. Matt. xxii. 37, 39). We all know, beloved brethren, that, if we were faithful to this Divine precept, we should become perfect. It was this law that transformed the human race, and if we could but persuade men to observe it, this world of ours would be soon turned into a heavenly paradise.

The rapidity with which the Gospel spread from one country to another is also a proof that it is the Word of God. St. Paul, even in those early days, congratulated the Romans upon their religion being made known to the whole world. Tertullian was able to tell the heathen world that Christians were to be found in every city, and that the temples alone of false gods knew them not. Pliny, who was governor

of a Roman province in Asia Minor, consulted the emperor about the means of stamping out a religion that had spread everywhere, so that the temples of the gods were quite deserted. Consider that this doctrine was opposed to everything that was dear to men, their interests, their passions, their religion, and their gods, proclaiming everywhere the necessity of adoring one God, and of levelling with the ground the temples that had been erected in honour of the deities of Athens and Rome. Consider, again, that this doctrine that inculcated the necessity of mortification and self-denial, and impressed upon the most voluptuous of nations the duties of charity and purity, was announced by poor fishermen, by the dregs of society, who had no human means at their disposal to overcome unheard-of difficulties. And then remember that this doctrine that proclaimed the divinity of One Who had died the ignominious death of a slave, triumphed over the combined efforts of a world that had risen in arms against it, and so completely that scarcely any traces are left of the mighty enemies that waged against it, in former days, a relentless war. When we consider all this, we must raise our eyes towards Heaven and cry out that this glorious victory was certainly the work of the Almighty: "Digitus Dei est hic." The triumph of Christianity over the heathen world is a manifest proof that it is the work of Heaven. As God not only created men, but continues to give them life, so He never ceases to protect His Church against her most powerful enemies.

For eighteen hundred years the Church of God has struggled against the powers of darkness. Her enemies are to be found in every country, and all classes of society seem bent upon her destruction. Her doctrine they cannot bear, and her presence, that reminds them of a God that will punish their iniquities in the world to come, is intolerable. To vilify the Church of God and hold her faithful children up to the execration of mankind, they scruple not to have recourse to the most vile devices, accusing her of falsehood, hypocrisy, immorality, and crimes that are most degrading to the human race. However, notwithstanding the hatred of men and their unscrupulous warfare, the Church of God is still alive and as flourishing and as vigorous as ever. She still continues to preach boldly the Word of God, and her ministers are as devoted as ever to the eternal truths that Jesus came to announce unto men. Hundreds and thousands of her children are ready to die for her Divine Founder, and the blood of martyrs continues to be, in the words of Tertullian, "a fertile seed of Christians."

AMEN.

XXIV.

ON THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

"That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father."—PHIL. ii. 10, 11.

IN virtue of the hypostatical union we can attribute to Christ things human and Divine—to God the things that are merely human, and to man those that are Divine. We are therefore justified in saying that God died for us, and that God is man, and that man is God, meaning that the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity was made flesh, and is God and man at the same time, God according to His Divine, and man according to His human, nature. We cannot, however, ascribe to the Divine nature in Christ human attributes, or to His sacred humanity those that are Divine, the two natures remaining, after being united, intact and perfectly distinct one from another. Luther fell into this grievous error, maintaining that our Lord's body was everywhere present. Such a confusion of ideas is altogether incomprehensible on the part of one who prided himself on his immense knowledge of the mysteries of the Godhead.

It is on account of the hypostatical union of the

Divine and human nature in Christ that we are justified in adoring His sacred humanity. When we adore His body, we adore at the same time a Divine Person. Should we conceive the body of our Lord separated from the Word of God, we could not adore it. But this is a thing impossible, the Divine and human nature in Christ being inseparably united, and were this union dissolved, the humanity of Christ would cease to be that of our Divine Lord. This doctrine is founded on Scripture. "And again, when He bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, He saith: And let all the angels of God adore Him" (Heb. i. 6). The angels are therefore invited to adore the Incarnate Son of God. Jesus is to receive homage and adoration as God and man, not only at His birth, but especially at the last day, when He shall come in all His majesty to judge the living and the dead. "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. . . . For which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above all names, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 6-11). The Apostle tells us that the Word was God, and equal to the Father in all things, and that He was made man, and humbled Himself, and became obedient unto the death of the

Cross. He committed no robbery in saying that He was equal to God, in declaring that He and the Father were One, because He was in reality God, and only attributed to Himself that supreme dignity, that Divine prerogative, to which He was entitled. He did not usurp a title that did not belong to Him, and to which He had no right. The Eternal God debased Himself and became man. The Creator of the world was born of poor parents in a stable at Bethlehem. The Omnipotent God became a little child, and subjected Himself to a life of poverty and wretchedness, in order to save unfortunate sinners. "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross" (Phil. ii. 8). The Cross was the instrument of our redemption. It was upon the Cross that Christ accomplished His great work, and atoned for the sins of the human race. He received, therefore, a name that is above every other name. "That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth" (Phil. ii. 10). This name signifies Saviour. "The name of Jesus," says St. Bernard, "is not only light to the blind, but food to the hungry." "Writings have for me no charms," says the saint, "unless I find in them the name of Jesus. This name is honey in the mouth, and music to the ear. If there be any one sad amongst you, let him invoke this Holy Name, and his melancholy will pass away like mist before the rising sun." Peter was therefore justified in prostrating himself before his Master, and crying out:

"Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God" (St. Matt. xvi. 16). Also at His birth the magi, who had come from the east, adored the Child Jesus, offering Him gold, frankincense, and myrrh: gold, to acknowledge His regal power; frankincense, as a confession of His Divinity; and myrrh, to proclaim Him truly man. This is also, beloved brethren, the teaching of the primitive Fathers. St. Augustine inculcates this doctrine in these words: "In my trial," says that illustrious Doctor, "I have recourse to Jesus, Who enables me to understand that one can adore the earth we tread on without committing an impiety. For flesh is of the earth—'Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return'—and Jesus took flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary. The Word of God appeared amongst us clothed in flesh, and this flesh He gave to be our food. 'For My flesh,' said Jesus, 'is meat indeed, and My blood is drink'; and no one eats this flesh who has not previously adored it." This is, of course, a mystery—a mystery above our comprehension—which we receive on the authority of God. St. John Damascenus explains it in the following terms: "We should," says the saint, "adore the flesh of Christ, because it is the flesh of the Son of God, subsisting in that Divine Person. It is not the creature that we serve; and the flesh that we adore is united hypostatically to the Divinity, so that the two natures belong to the same Person. When we adore the sacred humanity of Christ, we adore the Word of God. All adoration being centred in the Divine Person, the

homage and adoration we render the humanity of Christ must be supreme and Divine, it being the homage and adoration rendered unto a God Incarnate."

The devotion to the Sacred Heart is dear to all Christians. We adore the Sacred Heart because it is the Heart of the Son of God Incarnate, and because, the heart being the symbol of love, the Heart of Jesus is the symbol of that immense love He bore unto each one of us. Besides, this devotion kindles in our hearts the love of Jesus. "Learn of Me," says our Divine Lord, "because I am meek and humble of heart" (St. Matt. xi. 29). Of course, we cannot separate the Sacred Heart from the Divine Person, and when we adore it, we adore likewise the Word Incarnate, together with His sacred humanity. The reason that induces us to adore the Sacred Heart in a special manner is because, being the symbol of love, the Heart of Jesus reminds us of all that Jesus suffered for men, of His immense love, and makes us understand the necessity of making a return of love for love. What did not the Heart of Jesus suffer for men? Was there ever a heart more tender than His? Jesus wept over the death of Lazarus, and His tender Heart was pierced with grief at the affliction of the two sisters of His departed friend. He also began to weep over Jerusalem the moment He remembered the fearful punishment that God had in store for that ungrateful city. His Heart was so tender that He never refused a favour, and never turned a deaf ear

to the prayer of those who had recourse to Him in their trials and tribulations. Let us also, beloved brethren, put our confidence in the Sacred Heart. Are we afflicted, are we exposed to violent temptations? Let us address ourselves to Jesus; let us fly to the mercy-seat of God, to this loving Heart of our Divine Lord. Certainly we must all have our trials and tribulations. We all feel ourselves occasionally oppressed by the things that surround us on every side. We live in a Protestant country, in a country that has apostatized from the true faith, and that has ceased to worship in a manner conformable to His divine wish, the true and living God. Our churches and altars have been desecrated, the most sacred mysteries of our holy religion profaned, and the true followers of Christ have been either driven out of the land or exterminated. This sad state of things overwhelms us with grief. Let us not, however despair. Let us address our prayers to Heaven and ask God to have pity upon us, and upon this benighted land. Let us take refuge in the five wounds of Jesus and in His Sacred Heart, and that tender Heart will comfort us with heavenly peace and Divine consolation. "Come to Me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (St. Matt. xi. 28).

AMEN.

XXV.

ON THE ATONEMENT.

"And being consummated, He became to all that obey Him the cause of eternal salvation."—HEB. v. 9.

"SATISFACTION," beloved brethren, "is the reparation done for an injury inflicted upon another." This satisfaction may be adequate or inadequate; adequate, if we satisfy rigorously, and in strict justice, the person we may have offended; inadequate, if there be no proportion between the atonement and the injury; so that to obtain forgiveness, we totally depend upon the goodwill and forbearance of the offended party. According to the Socinians and other heretics, who deny the Divinity of our Lord, the whole work of our redemption consisted in the doctrine that Christ announced, and the good example He gave us. He redeemed us, inasmuch as He dispelled the darkness in which the world was buried, raising, by His doctrine and example, the minds of men from earthly and carnal things, in which they had lain grovelling for thousands of years, to the contemplation of heaven and the mysteries of the Godhead. Holy Church, however, maintains that Christ was not only our Teacher, but also our Re-

deemer and Mediator, and that He satisfied fully the Divine justice on our behalf, having offered to His heavenly Father an atonement adequate in every sense to the injury done Him. For our Divine Lord was truly God and truly man, the Word of God, the Second Person of the adorable Trinity, having assumed our flesh without ceasing to be God. This man-God suffered in His sacred humanity, offering Himself up incessantly as a victim of propitiation for the sins of men; and, as God, He ennobled His sufferings, He deified them, so that there was perfect equality between the injury and the atonement, and the offended Majesty of God was appeased by the sufferings and death of a God Incarnate. Christ suffered, therefore, in our stead; He ransomed us, the price paid for our redemption being His most precious blood. "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as gold and silver, from your vain conversation of the tradition of your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled" (1 Pet. i. 18, 19).

Sin, beloved brethren, is an offence against God, which entails upon the sinner punishment either in this world or in the next. To atone for sin we must satisfy the Divine justice and appease the anger of God. Now, Holy Church teaches that Christ suffered in our stead, offering Himself as a victim of propitiation for our sins. He paid the debt we contracted by sin, atoned by His Passion and Death for the injury done to Heaven, and appeased the anger of His

heavenly Father. Having pacified heaven, and rendered God propitious unto each one of us, He delivered us from hell, from that punishment to which God, in His justice, had condemned us. Further, He restored us to our lost inheritance, and opened unto us the gates of Heaven, providing all men with the means of salvation, with the graces that will enable them to become members of the elect, inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem.

By a work meritorious, *de condigno*, beloved brethren, is meant a work that entitles one to a reward either in this world or in the next. If the work be only meritorious, *de congruo*, the reward depends on the goodwill of the donor. Christ's works were meritorious in a most rigorous sense. To save us, He exposed Himself to all kinds of humiliation, to death itself. He purchased us with His own most precious blood, and on that account was exalted above all creatures, receiving a name above all other names, "that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father" (Phil. ii. 10, 11). He receiveth the nations for inheritance. "Si posuerit pro peccato animam suam, videbit semen longævum."—"If He shall lay down His life for sin, He shall see a long-lived seed" (Isa. liii. 10). The Doctrine of Atonement is alluded to by Isaias in these words: "But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins: the

chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed. . . . He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer and He shall not open His mouth" (Isaias liii. 5-7). That these words of the Prophet refer to our Divine Lord is evident from the interpretation put upon them by the Jews themselves. We can therefore very well understand that St. John the Baptist should have addressed Jesus in the following words: "Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him Who taketh away the sin of the world" (St. John i. 29). St. Paul tells us that Christ, who knew no sin, took upon Him our sins, was made man for us, that we might become holy before God, and that He died for all, that they who live should not live unto themselves, but unto Him Who died for them and rose again. We were redeemed by the blood of Christ, so that, being justified, we may have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled, shall we be saved by His life" (Rom. v. 10). The Apostle teaches that Christ died to blot out sin, that He offered Himself as a propitiatory victim for the salvation of men, reconciling them with God, and enabling them, by the merits of His Passion, to save their immortal souls. "For as by the disobedience of one man many were made sinners, so also by the obedience of One many shall be made just" (Rom. v. 19). This is the interpretation the holy Fathers put

upon the writings of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. They are unanimous in teaching that Christ redeemed us with His most precious blood, that His blood was the price of our ransom, and that this price enabled Him to confer upon us the title of children of God. They teach that Christ being God, all His actions were divine and of infinite value, so that one drop of His blood would have been sufficient to atone for a thousand worlds. "He is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of His death for the redemption of those transgressions which were under the former Testament, they that are called may receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Heb. ix. 15). Our Lord's sufferings and Passion entitled Him to a full pardon on behalf of fallen man, His heavenly Father having condemned Him to die for His brethren, promising to bestow upon Him, in recompense for His great sacrifice, the nations for inheritance. "If He shall lay down His life for sin, He shall see a long-lived seed; and the will of the Lord shall be prosperous in His hand. Because His soul hath laboured, He shall see and be filled: by His knowledge shall this My just Servant justify many, and He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore, will I distribute to Him very many, and He shall divide the spoils of the strong, because He hath delivered His soul unto death, and was reputed with the wicked. And He hath borne the sins of many, and hath prayed for the transgressors" (Isaias liii. 10-12). Our Divine Lord claimed as a reward for His services

both His own glorification and that of His followers. "I have glorified Thee on earth," says Jesus, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now, glorify Thou Me, O Father, with Thyself with the glory which I had before the world was, with Thee. . . . Father, I will that where I am they also, whom Thou hast given Me, may be with Me; that they may see My glory, which Thou hast given Me, because Thou hast loved Me before the creation of the world" (St. John xvii. 4, 5, and 24). Christ is, therefore, in the strictest sense possible, our Redeemer, our Mediator, our Propitiation. He redeemed us with His most precious blood. He appeased the anger of an irritated God, He reconciled us with Heaven, having fastened to the Cross the handwriting of the decree that was against us. Also this dear Lord never ceases to intercede for us, and to obtain from His Heavenly Father the graces that we may need for the salvation of our souls. He is the Author of every good gift. To Him we are indebted for the grace of our election and calling to the Faith. Of His fulness we have all received. "As He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and unspotted in His sight in charity, Who hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children through Jesus Christ" (Eph. i. 4, 5). We may also thank Him for all the actual graces that we receive, and also for sanctifying grace, a grace that cleanses us from sin, ennobles our immortal souls, and enables us to perform works worthy of an everlasting reward.

For the works that we perform are, in reality, to use the words of a saintly writer, the works of Christ, as the fruit of the branches is the fruit of the vine from which the branches receive their nourishment. "As the branch," says Christ, "cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you the branches; he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing" (St. John xv. 4, 5). Finally, we owe to Him not only all graces in this life, but everlasting happiness in the world to come. "According to His mercy, He saved us by the laver of regeneration and renovation of the Holy Ghost, whom He hath poured forth upon us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that, being justified by His grace, we may be heirs, according to hope of life everlasting" (Titus iii. 5-7).

AMEN.

XXVI.

ON THE HAPPINESS OF THE ELECT.

"They shall no more hunger nor thirst, neither shall the sun fall on them, nor any heat, for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall rule them, and shall lead them to the fountains of the waters of life. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."—Apoc. vii. 16, 17.

The elect in heaven, beloved brethren, see God face to face—they see the Divine Essence itself. "See that you despise not one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always see the face of My Father" (St. Matt. xviii. 10). And, since in the words of Scripture, men in heaven are like unto the angels, they must also enjoy the same beatific vision. "We see," says the Apostle, "now through a glass in a dark manner, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I shall know even as I am known" (1 Cor. xiii. 12). "We know," says St. John, "that when He shall appear we shall be like unto Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (St. John iii. 2).

We shall, therefore, see God face to face, we shall contemplate the Divine Essence, the Divinity itself. This is the teaching of Holy Church, this is the teaching of all the Fathers.

"Man," says St. Augustine, "cannot see the face

of God; but the angels of the little ones never cease to contemplate that divine face. Now we see, as it were, in a glass, but as soon as we shall have been changed into angels, we shall see God face to face." —"Homo Dei faciem videre non potest, angeli autem minimorum in ecclesia semper vident faciem Dei, et nunc in speculo videntes et in ænigmate, tunc autem facie ac faciem, quando ab hominibus in angelos profecerimus." Illuminated with a heavenly light, our souls will be, during endless ages, enraptured with delight at the sight of the loveliness and dazzling splendour of the Divinity. This vision is of course finite, God alone being able to fathom in its profoundest depths that ocean of wisdom: "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God; how incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways!" (Rom. xi. 33). "To have a glimpse of God," says St. Augustine, "is happiness itself; to comprehend Him is a thing impossible." "Our knowledge of the Deity depends," says St. Thomas, "upon that heavenly light that God bestows upon His elect, and as our aptitude to receive that light is limited, since we are finite beings, our vision must be also limited and finite." "In tantum enim intellectus creatus divinam essentiam perfectius vel minus perfecte cognoscit, in quantum majori vel minori lumine gloriæ perfunditur. Cum igitur lumen gloriæ creatum in quocumque intellectu creato receptum non possit esse infinitum, impossibile est quod aliquis intellectus creatus Deum infinite

cognoscat, unde impossibile est quod Deum comprehendat" (I. P., q. 12, a. 7).

"One is the glory of the sun, another the glory of the moon, and another the glory of the stars, for star differeth from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead" (1 Cor. xv. 41, 42). The elect will, therefore, shine like stars in the firmament. Some will be stars of the first magnitude, and of a dazzling splendour, others will be less brilliant, being less apt to receive and to irradiate the splendours of the Divinity.

This happiness the souls of the elect who have fully satisfied the Divine justice enjoy immediately after death. "We are confident," says the Apostle, "and have a good will to be absent rather from the body and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8). And again, "But I am straitened between two, having a desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ" (Phil. i. 23).

The Fathers teach the same thing. They frequently exhorted the Christians of their day to persevere in their struggles and to be ready to die for Christ, telling them that immediately after death they would receive their reward. St. John Chrysostom was wont to tell his people that the souls of the just, who died before Christ, were detained in Limbo until their Saviour had conquered death, but that in the new ordinance they were at once beatified and admitted into the Divine Presence. And St. Gregory Nazianzen consoled himself for the loss of a dear brother with the thought that he had already entered heaven, and was, resplendent with glory, seated in

the presence of his Royal Master. In speaking of the Roman Emperor's daughter who had recently died, the saint uses these words: "This plant has been rooted out of this earth and planted in Paradise. It has been translated from one kingdom to another, and how lovely that eye must be that can gaze upon the Deity."

Mortal man cannot form an idea of the loveliness of the Divinity. Everything that is most beautiful in this world is only a feeble reflection of the Divine beauty itself. We admire the heavens: the sun, the moon, the stars, those innumerable celestial bodies with which the firmament is studded; this planet of ours with its seas and mountains: but all this can bear no comparison with the uncreated beauty of the Godhead—a beauty that never changes nor suffers the slightest diminution. The most beautiful thing in existence soon decays and perishes: the Divine beauty on the contrary is unchangeable, and so enchanting that the elect never cease to be transported with delight, at the sight of charms that are altogether celestial and divine. Besides, this Divine beauty communicates itself, without being in the least impaired, to beatified souls, transforming them into its own likeness: "That, when He shall appear," says St. John, "we shall be like to Him, because we shall see Him as He is" (1 St. John iii. 2). The delight that flows from one glimpse of the Divinity surpasses every imaginable pleasure: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the

heart of man what things God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Cor. ii. 9). The Apostles who accompanied our Lord when He was transfigured were so delighted that Peter cried out, "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias" (St. Matt. xvii. 4). If the three chosen Apostles were enraptured with one glimpse of the glorified body of our Lord, who can imagine the happiness of those who during all eternity gaze upon not only a glorified body but the Deity itself! We can, therefore, well understand that St. Paul, who had been caught up to the third heaven, should have been enraptured at the sight of the things that he had seen. I may add that the happiness of the elect is unalterable: they never weary of contemplating the Divinity—that ocean of bliss—and those inexhaustible treasures that are daily unfolded before their eyes. The perfections of the Godhead being innumerable, infinite, and inexhaustible, the mental gaze of mortals can never tire of beholding them; and the elect will derive for ever from this contemplation the same pleasure they enjoyed the very first day they entered heaven. "They shall no more hunger nor thirst, nor shall the sun fall on them, nor any heat, for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall rule them and shall lead them to the fountains of the waters of life, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes" (Apoc. vii. 16, 17). AMEN.

XXVII.

ON PURGATORY.

"It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead."—2 Macc. xii. 46.

Our Catechism tells us, beloved brethren, that those souls that depart this life in venial sin, or that have not fully paid the debt of the temporal punishment due to those sins of which the guilt has been forgiven, go to purgatory, which is a place where souls suffer for a time after death on account of their sins. By mortal sin we offend God grievously, and expose ourselves to everlasting perdition. As soon as we do penance, we obtain forgiveness, and usually the eternal punishment is commuted into a temporal one, which we must suffer in this world or in the next. When David repented of the sin he had committed, the prophet told him that God in His mercy had forgiven him, but that in punishment thereof his child, the fruit of his iniquity, would be condemned to die. And this is what happens to most sinners. After the remission of a mortal sin, there generally remains the debt of temporal punishment, which we must discharge either here or hereafter, so that those who die without having fully satisfied the Divine

justice, and without having paid the debt due for those sins that have been already forgiven, must remain in purgatory until they have been thoroughly purified and rendered fit companions of the elect. "De fide est purgatorium esse," says the Council of Trent, "animasque ibi detentas fidelium suffragiis potissimum vero acceptabili altaris sacrificio invari" —"It is of faith that there is a purgatory, and that the souls detained therein are benefited by the prayers of the faithful, and especially by the most holy sacrifice of the Mass." This doctrine is founded on Holy Scripture, on tradition, and on the constant teaching of the Church. We read in the Old Testament that Judas Maccabeus, after having won a signal victory over the enemies of his country, sent a large sum of money to Jerusalem to have sacrifices and prayers offered up on behalf of those soldiers who had died valiantly fighting the battles of the Lord. "And making a gathering, he sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the Resurrection, and because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness had great grace laid up for them. It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins" (2 Macc. xii. 43-46). Judas Maccabeus and the whole Hebrew nation must have believed that such prayers and sacrifices were beneficial to their departed brethren, who, they imagined, were being purified in a middle

state of the remnants of their sins. Had they been condemned or already beatified, such prayers would have been quite useless. The New Testament inculcates the same doctrine. "Be at agreement with thy adversary betimes whilst thou art in the way with him, lest perhaps the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Amen I say to thee, thou shalt not go out from thence till thou repay the last farthing" (St. Matt. v. 25, 26). In this world we must be at agreement with the adversary, we must satisfy the Divine justice, otherwise God will deliver us one day to the Judge, Who will have us cast into prison, into purgatory, where we shall remain until we have paid the last farthing. And our Lord says: "He that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him neither in this world nor in the world to come" (St. Matt. xii. 32). There are, therefore, certain sins that are forgiven in the world to come. The Apostle Paul inculcates the same doctrine in his First Epistle to the Corinthians: "For other foundation no man can lay but that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus. Now, if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be manifest: for the day of the Lord shall declare it, because it shall be revealed in fire: and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work burn he shall suffer loss,

but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire" (1 Cor. iii. 11-15). The foundation upon which we must erect our spiritual edifice is Christ. Without a lively faith in Him, it is impossible to please God. Gold, silver, and precious stones are the works of mercy and charity that we perform, and for which we shall sooner or later receive a reward at the hands of the Almighty God. At the last day our good works shall be made manifest, shall be examined, and if they abide the ordeal of fire, the scrutinizing gaze of the great Judge, we shall have our reward, we shall be admitted into the Divine Presence. The wood, hay, and stubble are imperfect works, and even slightly sinful ones, which shall be exposed to the flames of purgatory, and thoroughly purified, so that he that shall have used in his spiritual building such materials shall be saved, yet so as by fire, by the purging flames of the middle state. St. Cyprian forbade prayers and the holy sacrifice to be offered up for Christians who had broken special precepts of the Church. And it was also forbidden, by the canons of the African Church of the second century, that Mass should be said for any priest who should have implicated himself in certain secular matters. From the very beginning, Mass and prayers were said for the dead in the whole African Church, in the Church of St. Cyprian, and St. Augustine. The same may be said of the Oriental Church. "We pray," says St. Cyril of Alexandria, "for the departed souls, being convinced that they benefit by our prayers, and

especially by those that we say in presence of the august Victim of our altars." The liturgies of the first centuries, the epitaphs that are found on the tombstones of the most remote period, contain prayers for the dead, and bear witness to the truth, to the teaching of the Catholic Church, so that Protestants are obliged to confess that this custom can be traced back to the Apostolic times themselves. Calvin declared that this doctrine had prevailed for thirteen hundred years, and would have continued to exercise its baneful influence upon men, had he not been sent by God to enlighten them, and scatter to the winds the monstrous errors of the Roman Church. Strange to say, the very men who were most prominent in denouncing the Catholic Church for this doctrine are now most anxious to profess their belief in a middle state. Protestants rejected purgatory for two reasons. First, because they could not understand how God could forgive sins without remitting at the same time the whole debt due to sin. Secondly, because purgatory was injurious to God and derogatory to the merits of our Divine Lord. The first difficulty is altogether unfounded, for we know that God can distribute His favours as He pleases, and may be more generous to some than to others. Besides, those that are well disposed receive graces in such abundance that the whole temporal punishment due to their sins is not unfrequently remitted; but that this does not always happen is evident from the example of King David and other sinners, who were

punished by God and condemned to do penance, to atone for their already forgiven sins, and to discharge the debt of the temporal punishment due to them. Purgatory is not, therefore, injurious to God, nor is it derogatory to the merits of Christ, for it is through Him that the holy souls are purified therein. Some souls die in a state of grace, and, being free from the slightest blemish, are beatified forthwith; others, who die in mortal sin, are doomed to everlasting perdition; but hundreds and thousands of holy souls die in venial sin, or without having fully satisfied the Divine Justice for sins already forgiven. Where are they to go? They are not damned, for they are supposed to die in God's grace and friendship; they cannot enter Heaven, being in a state of sin, although only venial, and not having as yet paid that debt of temporal punishment that is due to God for their sins, for nothing defiled can enter Heaven. They must, therefore, remain in a middle state until they have been quite purified and rendered worthy of being admitted into the Divine Presence.

To conclude, let me, beloved brethren, impress upon you the necessity of praying for these holy souls. We can assist them by our prayers, and deliver them from the flames of purgatory. There they suffer the most intense pain, and there they must remain until they have paid the last farthing. We hear their cries and lamentations, imploring us to intercede for them and help those who cannot help themselves. Can we refuse to assist them? Can we

turn a deaf ear to their prayers and supplications? Let us hasten to their assistance, remembering the words of our Divine Master, Who has promised a great reward for the smallest relief we may give to these distressed souls, remembering also that the souls that we shall have delivered will be our best friends and our most powerful advocates before the throne of God. "And I say to you, Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail they may receive you into everlasting dwellings" (St. Luke xvi. 9).

AMEN.

XXVIII.

ON HELL.

"Which of you can dwell with devouring fire? Which of you shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"—Isa. xxxiii. 14.

St. Bernard, beloved brethren, advises us to descend frequently in thought into hell, so that, terrified at the idea of being condemned to dwell for ever in that region of sorrow, we may avoid sin, and persevere until the end in the friendship of God. It is of faith that there is a hell, and that the sufferings of the damned are eternal: "Then He shall say to them also that shall be on His left hand, Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go into everlasting punishment, but the just into life everlasting" (St. Matt. xxv. 41, 46). And again, "Whosoever shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck and he were cast into the sea. And if thy hand scandalize thee cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed than having two hands to go into hell into unquenchable fire" (St. Mark ix. 41, 42). The fire of hell is, therefore, in the words of our Divine Lord Himself, unquench-

able and eternal. The holy Fathers are unanimous in teaching that the sufferings of the damned are everlasting. And this doctrine seems to have prevailed not only among Christians, but also among heathen nations. Let us, therefore, try to form an idea of the sufferings of these lost souls. They suffer in all the senses and in all their faculties. Shut up in a loathsome prison, they are condemned to live for ever in the society of the reprobate. What a dreadful thought, to be doomed to associate during endless ages with the vilest and most degraded of men! In those regions there is no happiness, no hope, but perpetual horror dwelleth therein. There are heard the curses and execrations of the damned, who never cease to blaspheme and to hurl defiance at God Himself. There is a curse upon each of their faculties; never do they cease to suffer at the thought of having lost Heaven, and having condemned themselves to everlasting perdition for one mortal sin, for a fleeting pleasure. Had they resisted a certain temptation, had they fought manfully against the insinuations of the evil one, they would be now in Heaven, and for ever happy in the company of the elect. All is now lost! There is no hope left; they must live for ever, to undergo, as long as there is a God above, the most excruciating torments in the flames of hell. Their will is confirmed in evil; they hate God with an inveterate hatred that nothing can diminish, so that between them and their Creator there is an impassable gulf that can never be bridged over. In

hell there is no redemption; the damned being no longer able to avail themselves of the merits of Christ, their sins can never be blotted out, nor can there be an end to the fearful sufferings that their folly has entailed upon them. "Which of you can dwell with devouring fire?" (Isa. xxxiii. 14). Yes, beloved brethren, we should frequently ask ourselves this question, and tremble at the sight of those devouring flames. We shudder at the thought of being burnt alive. An immense fire is an awful sight, and we are horrified when we hear of unfortunate beings who have perished in the flames. Even the very thought of a St. Lawrence dying slowly on a red-hot gridiron fills us with horror. And what is all this in comparison with the fire of hell, with that fire which God in His anger has kindled to punish during all eternity the wicked and the reprobate? "O regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace and happiness never dwell, and hope never comes, that comes to all!"

The thought of having lost God always torments the damned. God alone could satisfy the cravings of their immortal souls, and now they are eternally separated from Him. He is lost for ever, irrevocably lost. They are for ever excluded from the presence of their Creator, their God, their best friend. Can mortal man conceive the grief with which those unfortunate souls are overwhelmed at such a thought? Overcome, crushed, and driven to despair, they raise their doleful eyes towards Heaven, and implore God

to put an end to their miserable existence. But this favour they ask in vain; they must live and undergo for ever unutterable sufferings in the bottomless pit of perdition. That the fear of hell may be indelibly impressed upon us, I will conclude with the following words. "In order," says Bishop Challoner, "to form a better idea of this miserable eternity, what an immense space of time would be required for anyone of the damned, if he were to shed but one tear in a thousand years, to shed tears enough to fill the ocean. The world has not as yet lasted six thousand years, so that the first of all the damned would not have shed six tears. And yet, O dreadful eternity, the time will most certainly come when anyone of these wretches shall be able with truth to say that at the rate of one tear for a thousand years he might have shed tears enough not only to make a sea, but to drown the whole world, and to fill up the vast space between heaven and earth. And yet, alas! after these millions of millions of ages, he shall be as far off from the end of his misery as he was the first day he came into that place of woe. Compute after this, if thou pleasest, as many hundred thousand millions of years as thy thought can reach to; suppose, if thou wilt, the whole surface of the earth to be covered with numeral figures; cast up, if thou canst, this prodigious sum of years, and then multiply it by itself, and multiply a second time the product by itself, and then at the foot of this immense sum write down, Here begins eternity. Oh terrible eternity! is

it possible that they who believe should not fear thee? is it possible that they who fear thee should sin?" Let this fire of hell, beloved brethren, be ever present before our eyes, filling us with fear and consternation, and never shall we sin, never shall we presume to offend the Almighty God.

AMEN.

XXIX.

ON THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

"I believe in the resurrection of the dead."—APOSTLES' CREED.

WE shall all, beloved brethren, rise one day from the dead. "For I know," says Job, "that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall he clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God, Whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold, and not another" (Job xix. 25-27). "And many of those," as the Prophet Daniel says, "that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some unto life everlasting, and others unto reproach, to see it always" (Dan. xii. 2). The same doctrine is frequently inculcated in the New Testament. As Jesus approached Bethany He met Martha, who said, "If Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. Jesus saith to her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith to Him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day" (St. John xi. 21-24). On another occasion our Lord proclaimed the same truth in these terms. Answering the Sadducees who denied the resurrection, He exclaimed: "You err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the

resurrection they shall neither marry nor be married, but shall be as the angels of God in heaven. And concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read that which was spoken by God, saying to you: I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. He is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (St Matt. xxii. 29-32).

St. Paul also impressed this same teaching upon the Corinthians in the following words: "For if the dead rise not again, neither is Christ risen again; and if Christ be not risen again, your faith is vain; then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ are perished" (1 Cor. xv. 16-18). But the Head having risen, it is but fitting that the members should rise also. Having suffered with Christ, we shall be glorified with Him. Our bodies will put on incorruptibility and shine like stars in the firmament. The general resurrection will be followed by the last judgment, and this will account for the tenacity with which men try to persuade themselves that there is no future life. Whether they believe it or not, there will be a future life; but whether it shall be a happy or a wretched one will depend upon their belief and the lives they lead in this world. "For we must all be manifested," as the Apostle tells us, "before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, whether it be good or evil" (2 Cor. v. 10). St. John also writes: "And I saw the dead, great and small, standing in the presence of the Throne, and

the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged by those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and hell gave up their dead that were in them, and they were judged everyone according to their works" (Apoc. xx. 12, 13). "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves" (St. Luke xxi. 25). In this universal shock of nature the earth will be destroyed and reduced to ashes. Suddenly the trumpet shall sound, and all shall rise from their graves and appear in the valley of Josaphat. How the souls of the blessed will rejoice at being reunited to their bodies! After years of trials and sufferings, borne with the greatest patience and resignation, they will henceforth continue to enjoy together inexpressible happiness in the company of the elect. On the other hand, who can conceive the intense grief and sadness that will afflict the reprobate souls at the thought of being imprisoned in their hideous bodies for endless ages? They must, however, obey the decrees of Heaven and appear before the tribunal of Christ. The Judge is seated on His throne and surrounded by myriads of angels, while the Cross is seen shining in the heavens, and dazzling with its splendour the feeble eyes of mortal men. The Cross that delights the elect covers the wretched with confusion, and fills

them with terror and consternation ; for it recalls to their minds all that Jesus suffered for them, and their own ingratitude and infatuation. The Cross they despised, spat upon, and trampled under foot, and now they are obliged to prostrate themselves in the dust and adore it. In their anguish and despair they cry out in the words of Julian the Apostate, "Galilean, Thou hast conquered."

The Book of Life is opened and the deeds of all are made manifest to the whole world. The sins of the wicked are published to the universe, sins of the blackest dye, the very thought of which is more unbearable than death itself. Driven to despair, the reprobates call upon the mountains to fall upon them and save them from unutterable shame and confusion. "When the Son of man shall come in His majesty," says the Evangelist, "and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the seat of His majesty. And all nations shall be gathered together before Him, and He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats. And He shall set the sheep on His right hand and the goats on His left. Then shall the King say to them that shall be on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave Me to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me to drink, I was a stranger and you took Me in; naked and you covered Me ; sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me. Then shall the

first answer Him, saying, Lord, when did we see Thee hungry and fed Thee; thirsty and gave Thee drink? And when did we see Thee a stranger and took Thee in? or naked and covered Thee? Or when did we see Thee sick or in prison and came to Thee? And the King answering shall say to them, Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me. Then He shall say to them also that shall be on His left hand, Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave Me not to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me not to drink; I was a stranger and you took Me not in; naked and you covered Me not; sick and in prison and you did not visit Me. Then they also shall answer Him, saying, Lord, when did we see Thee hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to Thee? Then He shall answer them, saying, Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it not to one of these least, neither did you do it to Me. And these shall go into everlasting punishment; but the just into life everlasting" (St. Matt. xxv. 31-46).

Let us, beloved brethren, tremble for ourselves, never forgetting that we must appear one day before the dreadful tribunal of God, and render an account of our whole lives. Filled with fear at the thought of that awful day, let us live so as to be ever ready to appear before our Judge.

AMEN.

XXX.

ON FAITH.

"Go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee."—St. Matt. viii. 13.

Without faith it is impossible to please God. It is faith that ennobles our works, and renders them worthy of everlasting life. As a piece of metal, however valuable it may be, has no currency unless marked with the king's effigy, so our good works, let them be ever so beautiful, if not performed in a spirit of faith, are not conducive to everlasting salvation. This doctrine the Apostle inculcates in his Epistle to the Romans. He tells the Jews that unless they believe in Christ all their good works will prove useless. So it is, beloved brethren, with those who are outside the Church through their own fault. In vain do they live holy lives; in vain do they mortify themselves; in vain do they distribute their goods in charity and works of mercy. If these works do not proceed from true faith and supernatural grace, they will have no reward in the world to come. "If I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor," says the Apostle, "and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass" (1 Cor. xiii. 3, 1). And without

faith there is no true charity. The Council of Trent says that faith is the beginning, the foundation, and the root of our spiritual life. It is the beginning, because "without faith it is impossible to please God." It is the foundation; what the foundation is to a building, faith is to our spiritual life. It is the root; the root not only supports the tree, but it gives life to all the branches. In like manner faith gives life to all the supernatural works that we perform. Why do we mortify ourselves? Why do we forgive our enemies? Is it not because we believe Him Who tells us that, as we treat others, so we may expect to be treated by the Almighty God Himself.

"Now faith," says St. Paul, "is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not" (Heb. xi. 1). We hope in God and in another world, because we believe in the Divine Word, and trust in the Lord. Our hope is founded on our faith. And, animated with this faith, we act as if we possessed heaven itself and the good things that God has in store for us. "Faith is the evidence of things that appear not" (Heb. xi. 1). On the authority of God, we believe things that we cannot understand. Faith renders acceptable to us mysteries that are above our comprehension. Faith compels us to believe those things that we see not and understand not as if we saw them with our own eyes, and understood them perfectly. Thus enlightened by this heavenly gift, we believe the most unfathomable mysteries as if they were the deductions of our own

reason. We believe, for instance, the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, that in God there are three distinct persons, and one God, because faith teaches us that this mystery has been revealed by God. We cannot comprehend this, yet nevertheless we accept it on the authority of that God Who cannot possibly deceive us. And this is reasonable, for it is but natural that God, Whose knowledge is infinite, should know things that are above our ken, and, in His goodness, give us a glimpse of those truths the comprehension of which will be unto the elect a source of everlasting bliss. "Faith," says St. Augustine, "is to believe what we see not, and its reward will consist in seeing what we have believed." "Fides est credere quod non vides, et merces est videre quod credidisti." We must not confound faith with hope as certain heretics do, who maintain that faith consists in having an unbounded confidence in being saved. On the contrary, the Apostle tells us that faith is the evidence of things not seen; it must, therefore, abide in the intellect and not in the will, for by it we are convinced of the reality of things unseen. We must believe certain truths, under penalty of damnation. These are: that there is one God, Who rewards the good, and punishes the wicked; that in this God there are three Divine Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; also, the mystery of the Incarnation: that God the Son became man, and by His Passion and Death redeemed us from sin and hell. We are also commanded to believe the principal truths that are con-

tained in the "Apostles' Creed," and to know the "Our Father," the "Hail Mary," the Commandments of God and the Church, and the Sacraments. We should frequently make acts of faith, and we should never cease to ask God to grant us the grace of never losing that faith which we inherited from our forefathers.

AMEN.

XXXI.

ON FAITH AND THE MOTIVES OF CREDIBILITY.

"Without faith it is impossible to please God."—Heb. xi. 6.

Faith is a supernatural gift that enables us to believe without doubting whatever God has revealed. Faith is a supernatural gift, a habit infused into our souls, and has for its object God, and the truths that He has revealed. We believe these truths on the authority of God, Who cannot deceive or be deceived. Our faith, being founded on the authority of God, must be firm, and embrace all God's revealed truths, and all that Holy Church proposes to our belief. We must be ready to die for one single article of faith. An act of faith is most pleasing to God, for each time that we make one we pay homage to His veracity and offer to Him the sacrifice of that which is most dear to us. We proclaim God to be truth itself, an ocean of wisdom, which the feeble mind of man cannot, in the least, fathom. The motives of credibility, the motives that induce us to believe, that manifest unto us how reasonable our faith is, are numerous, and worthy of our consideration. We have, first of all, the predictions of the prophets that were fulfilled in our Divine Lord. To prove that He was the Messiah, the desired of all nations, our Lord appealed fre-

quently to Holy Scripture, to Moses, and to the prophets. You remember the apparition with which He favoured the disciples of Emmaus. As the two disciples were on their road to Emmaus, our Lord appeared without being recognised, and asked them what they conversed about. Perceiving that they had lost all hope in Him, He upbraided them for their want of faith, and beginning with Moses, He unfolded unto them the Holy Scriptures, and proved that, according to the predictions of the prophets, the Messiah should be put to death, and rise again, the third day, from the grave. The Apostle of the Gentiles also, to prove the truths that he inculcated, frequently had recourse to the Word of God, to the predictions of the prophets. In his Epistle to the Romans, he tells the Jews that Christ is the author of life, that those who believe in Him shall be saved. He tells them that they have been rejected for having rejected Christ, and that the Gentiles have been adopted in their place, recalling to their minds the words of Isaias and other prophets, who had predicted this event. Another motive of credibility is the holiness of a great number of the followers of Christ, and of the doctrines of the Church. God is holy, and the Source of all holiness; and a doctrine that renders holy hundreds and thousands of mortal men must have its source at that Fountain-head. The innumerable miracles that have been performed on behalf of our holy faith furnish us with the most striking motive of credibility. A miracle is a manifest sign of the

will of God, and when He sanctions with miracles the teaching of men, we must believe them. Their credentials are undeniable, and were we deceived, God Himself would have deceived us. See what prodigious miracles our Divine Lord and His Apostles performed in proof of the veracity of the doctrines that they announced. "I and the Father are One" (St. John x. 30), said Jesus. When the Jews wanted to stone Him for having said that He was God, He appealed to His works, to His miracles. "Destroy," He said, "this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (St. John ii. 19). To prove the truth of His doctrine, that He was equal to the Father, He appealed to His resurrection, and God put the seal of His Divine veracity upon this assertion, by raising His Son from the grave on the third day.

The conversion of the world is also a motive of credibility. The Christian doctrine spread with such rapidity that a hundred years after the death of Christ there was hardly a spot of the inhabitable globe that had not been visited by some Apostle. "We are of yesterday," says Tertullian, "and are, nevertheless, so numerous that if we withdrew ourselves, your empire would become an immense solitude." Even St. Paul congratulated the Romans on their faith having been made known to the whole universe. And by what means was the heathen world converted? Twelve poor fishermen, twelve illiterate men, twelve feeble mortals, were the instruments the Almighty God used to work the greatest miracle the eyes of

man ever witnessed. St. Augustine says, "The conversion of the world, without miracles, would be the greatest of all miracles." The conversion of one soul is a great miracle. Does it not take years to convert one single heretic? Riches, eloquence, science, all prove useless to induce one single individual to embrace our holy religion; and that twelve illiterate men, the very dregs of society, should have converted in a few years, not only men of their own social position, but kings and philosophers, and the élite of the most refined society that ever existed, is a miracle that fills us with astonishment. The Apostles had no command of eloquence or riches, were not supported by powerful kings, were deprived of all those means which enable men to attain their end. Far from flattering the passions of men, as Mahomet and others have done, they preached mortification, self-denial, humility, chastity, and a thousand other virtues unknown to the heathen world. This doctrine they announced to all nations, to Greek and barbarian, and with the greatest success. The most civilized peoples embraced Christianity, and prostrated themselves before that Christ Who had died upon a Cross the ignominious death of a slave. At the voice of these men, the voluptuous became chaste, the proud humble, the wealthy stripped themselves of their riches and bestowed them upon the poor, deeming it a supreme honour to be allowed to walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. Hundreds and thousands sealed their faith with their blood. The innumerable martyrs of the

first years of the Church present another motive of credibility. How can we account for such heroism? Men and women die for Christ, and rather than deny Him they undergo the most excruciating tortures. Some are torn to pieces by the wild beasts of the Roman amphitheatre, others are burnt alive, and allowed to die the cruellest death that the ferocity of man can invent, and all to no purpose. Christians are not to be intimidated, and the more they are butchered the more numerous they become. "The blood of martyrs," says Tertullian, "is a fertile seed of unconquerable Christians." I may mention that the spirit that animated the primitive Christians has not changed. The children of those martyrs still live, and are full of the same zeal, and ready to die for the same holy religion. The Church that the Apostles founded is still flourishing, and continues to send forth apostolic men to all quarters of the inhabitable globe. These are the principal motives of credibility, but they are not sufficient for an act of faith. For this, grace is required, that grace which enlightens the mind, touches the heart, and induces us to believe all revealed truths, on the authority of God, Who cannot deceive or be deceived. This grace comes from above; it is given to all men, and further grace is given to all those who pray for it. Let us ask God to grant us this gift, so that we may begin to live in this world that supernatural life that will entitle us, if we persevere, to everlasting bliss in the world to come. AMEN.

XXXII.

ON MIRACLES.

"And they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of a corruptible man, and of birds, and of four-footed beasts and of creeping things, wherefore God gave them up to the desires of their heart unto uncleanness, to dishonour their own bodies among themselves."—Rom. i. 23, 24.

There is no reason, beloved brethren, why God should not manifest His will to men and unfold to them truths and mysteries, the knowledge of which redounds to His honour and glory. When God has recourse to men to make known His will unto mankind, He provides them with means that enable us to see at once that they are His trusted ambassadors. To prove that the doctrine they announce is true, they appeal to Heaven, and the omnipotent arm of the Lord is at once felt. Miracles are performed that not only confirm the veracity of their teaching, but place it beyond the possibility of a doubt.

Certainly God can manifest to men mysteries that are altogether above their comprehension. That mysteries exist, is evident to all those who consider the nature of the Godhead. Certain truths are known to God that are quite beyond the grasp of the feeble mind of man, and these the Lord can reveal to

whom He pleases. It is undeniable that mysteries exist, this world itself being full of them. Can we understand why or how a grain of seed cast into the ground brings forth a hundredfold? We know that we are composed of a body and a soul, but do we understand in the least the way in which the soul animates the body? These are things that are quite above our comprehension, so that we should not be astonished at finding that there are mysteries in the supernatural order, and that the Godhead, that unfathomable ocean, has secrets unknown to mortal men. These secrets He is free to reveal to whom He will.

The most civilized nations of antiquity worshipped false gods. Some adored the stars, others fell prostrate before the statues of great men, and the most vile animals had altars erected to their honour. As we read in the Book of Wisdom, the wood that was useless for any purpose was good enough for a god. Besides, the gods of the ancient Greeks and Romans were most vicious and voluptuous. They fattened upon crimes the very thought of which covers us with shame and confusion. The Roman matron, that model of austerity, deemed it a privilege to be allowed to vilify herself in order to honour the divinity. The unutterable horrors, that were daily committed to render the deity propitious, were so enormous that we dare not allude to them. What then must have been the depravity of a nation that had erected temples in honour of such gods? "Who changed the truth of

God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, Who is blessed for ever. For this cause God delivered them up to shameful affections" (Rom. i. 25, 26). It is quite true that certain men raised their voices occasionally against the state of universal demoralization. But they preached in vain, for no one followed their advice or even paid the slightest attention to their reproaches. The multitude continued to worship the gods of their forefathers and to abandon themselves to their unclean appetites and unbridled passions. Besides, the very men who raised their voices against the obscenities of the gods of Greece and Rome were the first to offer incense at their shrines. It was, therefore, but natural that the teaching of such individuals should fall flat upon the ears of a deluded and miserable people. Their doctrine had no sanction whatever, and their lives gave the lie to the truths they announced. The teaching of such men had, therefore, little effect, and could not by any means stem the torrent of infidelity and profanity that was carrying on the nations with irresistible force to utter ruin and destruction. God alone could save men whose minds had been totally depraved. To save them the Son of God was made man, and became one of us, without ceasing to be God. "For God so loved the world," says St. John, "as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting" (St. John iii. 16).

Miracles and prophecies that can be traced to God

alone attested His divine mission, and the truth of the doctrine that He taught. A miracle, beloved brethren, is a wonderful work above human power, and performed in attestation of truth. Miracles are the voice of Heaven, for God can allow them to be performed only on behalf of truth. That miracles are possible no reasonable man can deny, considering that God Who gave laws to the universe can suspend these laws for just reasons. The same God Who decreed from all eternity to govern by immutable laws the works of creation may have determined to suspend these laws for reasons known to Him and worthy of His supreme wisdom. When miracles are performed in attestation of any doctrine, we must conclude that it is true. Being truth itself, God cannot allow men to work miracles in favour of a false doctrine, and use His Name to attest what is false. Men declare that their doctrine is from above, and to sanction their teaching appeal to God for a miracle, and in response to their request He raises the dead to life. In such a case we are perfectly justified in believing them, and were we imposed upon, we could justly accuse God of having deceived us and led us astray. Our Divine Lord not unfrequently appealed to His works, to the miracles that He performed, to confirm the truth of the doctrine that He taught. His miracles no one could contest, and His enemies, who durst not deny them, attributed them to the power of darkness. These miracles were performed on behalf of all classes of people, in the presence of friends and enemies, and

were so numerous and stupendous that deception was impossible. Hundreds and thousands witnessed the resurrection of Lazarus, who had been dead four days, and whose body had begun already to stink—*jam fœtet.* Upon receiving sight, the man born blind was brought before the Scribes and Pharisees, who interrogated him upon the manner in which he had been cured. They failed, however, notwithstanding their hatred of Christ, to explain away a miracle that had attracted the attention of the whole city, and that was evidently the work of God. "Now we know," said the man who had been born blind, "that God doth not hear sinners, but if a man be a server of God and doth His will, him He heareth. From the beginning of the world it hath not been heard that any man hath opened the eyes of one born blind. Unless this man were of God he could not do anything" (St. John ix. 31-33). To attest the truth of His doctrine, our Lord appealed to the greatest of all miracles, His own resurrection. The Pharisees, who knew well what an effect it would have upon the world, left no stone unturned to render it abortive, ordering "the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day, lest perhaps His disciples come and steal Him away, and say to the people, He is risen from the dead; and the last error shall be worse than the first" (St. Matt. xxvii. 64). The precautions they took to prevent deception places this great event beyond all dispute, so that the Apostles who had witnessed the resurrection of our Divine Lord feared not to

preach Christ risen at the peril of their lives. "Ye men of Israel," said St. Peter, addressing the people, who wondered at what had happened to the lame man that sat begging at the gate of the temple, "why wonder you at this? or why look you upon us, as if by our strength or power we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified His Son Jesus, Whom you indeed delivered up, and denied before the face of Pilate, when he judged He should be released. But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you. But the author of Life you killed Whom God hath raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses. And in the faith of His Name this man hath his name strengthened" (Acts iii. 12-16).

The predictions that our Lord made are quite sufficient to prove that His mission was Divine. Everything that He predicted has been fulfilled. He told His followers that they would be hated and persecuted, and that His enemies would never cease to wage against them a relentless war. He also foretold the ruin of Jerusalem, giving in detail all the circumstances of that dreadful event. "And when He drew near, seeing the city, He wept over it, saying, For the days shall come upon thee, and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee; and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone,

because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation" (St. Luke xix. 41-44). "And when you shall see Jerusalem compassed about with an army, then know that the desolation thereof is at hand. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains; and those who are in the midst thereof depart out; and those who are in the countries not enter into it. For these are the days of vengeance: that all things may be fulfilled that are written. But woe to them that are with child, and give suck in those days; for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people, and they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captives into all nations. And Jerusalem shall be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the nations be fulfilled" (St. Luke xxi. 20-24). A few years after our Lord's death a Roman army besieged Jerusalem. The city was taken and destroyed, the inhabitants put to the sword, or reduced to slavery. The destruction of a whole nation must inspire us with awe at the thought of offending the Sovereign Majesty of heaven, and bring home to us what a dreadful thing it is to fall into the hands of an angry God.

AMEN.

XXXIII.

ON THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

"I believe in the one, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church."
—NICENE CREED.

THE Church is one, beloved brethren, because all her members agree in one faith, have all the same sacrifice and Sacraments, and are all under one head. All Catholics believe the same truths, receive the same Sacraments, and acknowledge the Bishop of Rome as the head of the Universal Church. A true follower of Christ must profess the religion the Apostles announced, and be united with the supreme head of the Church. Our Lord raised St. Peter to this dignity. "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth it shall be loosed also in heaven" (St. Matt. xvi. 18, 19). The Church, being the pillar and ground of truth, cannot teach error; so that her children are obliged to be ever attentive to her voice, and to receive the heavenly truths that she announces. To her was entrusted the deposit of faith, and the

Spirit of God abides with her for ever, teaching all truth, and preventing her from going astray. Therefore, she cannot possibly fall into error when she unfolds the great truths of revelation, of which she is the guardian and infallible interpreter. To be saved, we must be members of the true Church, and in communion with the Bishops of Rome, who are the successors of St. Peter. Christ prayed that Peter's faith should never fail, so that, being converted, he might confirm his brethren. "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not, and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren" (St. Luke xxii. 31, 32). This prerogative, having been granted for the benefit of the Church that was to exist until the end of time, must be inherited by the successors of St. Peter, the Bishops of Rome. They also are entrusted with the care of the whole flock of Christ, and must protect it against all dangers, and against those ravenous wolves that never cease to prowl about the true fold, seeking whom they may devour.

The Catholic Church alone possesses this unity. Protestants do not even pretend to it. They believe whatever they please, putting upon the words of Holy Writ whatever construction suits them best. A man may be a minister of the Protestant Church, and deny the fundamental truths of Christianity, the Divinity of Christ Himself. How can a Church that allows her ministers to utter blasphemies against Heaven,

against our Divine Lord, be the Church of the one, true, and living God? What a wretched spouse to allow her children to bespatter, to throw dirt at, the Son of God Himself! How could a true spouse prove so faithless to her lord and master? It is impossible for the Protestant Church to have unity of faith. Private interpretation is destructive of this mark of the true Church. Being allowed to interpret the Bible as they please, Protestants necessarily differ one from another on the meaning of revealed truth. In their difficulties they have no one to appeal to, so that they are continually tossed about by every wind of doctrine. We, on the contrary, are of one faith, for we are all under one head, the Bishop of Rome, the successor of St. Peter, whom Christ appointed to be the head of the Church, against which the gates of hell shall never prevail. Christ prayed that Simon's faith should never fail, and we know that our Lord's prayer was heard, and that Simon and his successors in the See of Rome will ever remain faithful to their heavenly mission.

"The Church is holy, for she teaches a holy doctrine, offers to all the means of holiness, and is distinguished by the eminent holiness of so many thousands of her children." She was established in order to make us holy, and worthy of that celestial bliss for which we were created. "As Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the Word of life, that He might

present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. v. 25-27). The doctrine of the Church is certainly most holy, being the doctrine of her Divine Founder, the doctrine that renovated the face of the earth. Her Sacraments are holy, for they are the channels of innumerable graces that are incessantly communicated to each one of us. Her children, in great numbers, are also remarkable for the holiness of their lives. Of course, there are some exceptions; but the wickedness of these members of the Church must be attributed to their not keeping her precepts. On the other hand, the teaching of the Protestant Church is destructive of all holiness. Luther maintained that faith alone would save us, good works being quite useless and injurious to the merits of Christ. "Crede fortiter et pecca fortius"—"Believe firmly, and do what thou wilt." According to Calvin, God is the author of sin, and some men are lost beyond all redemption, God having doomed them to everlasting perdition, and to suffer for ever in the flames of hell the tortures of the damned. Thus, having rejected the Sacraments, and proclaimed from the housetops that prayer and good works are quite useless, what means of sanctification can the Protestant Church offer to those who aspire after holiness and perfection?

The Church is Catholic, "because she subsists in all ages and teaches all nations." The Church of God must be Catholic. Christ sent His Apostles to

teach all nations all whatsoever He had commanded them. As His Church was to exist in all ages until the end of time, she must have this distinctive mark, she must be Catholic. The Church of Rome alone is Catholic. She alone existed from the very beginning, teaching everywhere the same truths, and never ceasing to convert nations, and to hand down from one generation to another the doctrine her Heavenly Master sent her to announce. The Protestant Church is certainly not Catholic, having existed only three hundred years, and being divided into a hundred jarring sects, not one of which has continued to teach the same truths. A Church whose members are thus hopelessly divided on matters of religious belief cannot be the Church of Christ.

"The Church is Apostolic, because she holds her doctrine and traditions from the Apostles, and because through an unbroken succession of her pastors she derives her orders and mission from them." The doctrine of the Church must be that which the Apostles announced, since Christ appointed them to preach the Gospel throughout the whole world. She must hold her orders and mission from them, for who shall preach unless he be sent? "Neither doth any man take the honour to himself but he that is called by God, as Aaron was" (Heb. v. 4). The Church of Rome is alone Apostolic, having been founded by an Apostle, and being able by an unbroken succession of pastors to trace her origin back to the Apostolic times themselves. Having been only three hundred years

in existence, the Protestant Church cannot claim apostolicity. The doctrine she teaches is not that of the Apostles, nor have her orders and mission, if she have any, been handed down to her from the Apostles by an unbroken succession of pastors and bishops. An immense gulf, a period of fifteen hundred years, separates her from the Apostolic times, and that gulf she can never bridge over. The Church is also Infallible in her teaching. Christ promised to be with her until the end of the world, and to send her the Paraclete, Who would teach her all truth, and abide with her for ever. As she was built upon a rock, the gates of hell shall never prevail against her. The Bishop of Rome, who is the head of the Church, is also infallible, and cannot err, whenever, as supreme teacher, he defines a doctrine of faith or morals to be held by all Christians. Whenever he raises his voice the whole Catholic world listens with rapt attention, and his decisions are at once received by all as if they came from God Himself. He is the bond of union that links together all the members of the Catholic Church, and those who are not in communion with him are not in the way of salvation. "I am," says St. Jerome, "in communion with your Holiness, that is, with the Chair of Peter: upon that rock I know the Church is built. Whoever eats the Lamb out of this house is profane; whosoever gathers not with thee scatters; that is, he who is not of Christ belongs to antichrist."

AMEN.

XXXIV.

ON DIVINE GRACE.

"Depart from me, ye malignant, and I will search the commandments of my God."—Ps. cxviii. 115.

The grace of God not being by any means, as certain heretics would have us believe, destructive of our liberty, we are quite free, beloved brethren, to resist the holy inspirations that come from Heaven. Were we not perfectly free under the impulse of Divine grace, the Apostle could not, as St. Augustine remarks, "exhort us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling." This doctrine does not in the least infringe upon the efficacy of Divine grace; for God can grant His favours to those whom He wishes to save at a time when He foresees that they will consent to, and follow, His heavenly voice. "God," says St. Augustine, "does not show His mercy in vain; whosoever is the object thereof, him He calleth when He knoweth that His voice shall not remain unheeded."

In this life we all receive from God graces that are quite sufficient for our salvation. Christ, having died for the salvation of men, provides them all with the means that will enable them to save their immortal

souls: and if they perish, they have themselves alone to blame for it: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldest not" (St. Matt. xxiii. 37).

It is of faith that God bestows upon the just, and His faithful followers, graces that enable them to keep His precepts and do His will in all things. "God is faithful," says the Apostle, "Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. x. 13). Our Lord tells us that His yoke is easy and His burden light, and as this can only be the effect of God's grace, it follows that this heavenly grace is granted to all, and especially to the just, to His faithful followers on earth. "When God," says St. Augustine, "hath raised a sinner to a state of grace and perfection, He does not, unless forsaken, abandon him to himself, but continues to protect him, so that he may live a holy life."

Holy Church also teaches that God gives His graces to sinners, let them be ever so obstinate and hardened in their evil ways, so that they may be converted and do penance for their sins: "As I live, saith the Lord God, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, and why

will you die, O house of Israel?" (Ezek. xxxiii. 11). Not only sinners, but heretics, infidels, and heathens are provided with the means of salvation. Did not St. Paul exhort Timothy to pray for all men? "I desire, therefore," says the Apostle in his Epistle to Timothy, "first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings, and for all that are in high station . . . for this is good, and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth: for there is one God, and one Mediator of God and men, the man Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself a redemption for all" (1 Tim. ii. 1-6).

Sanctifying grace, beloved brethren, is "the charity of God, poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost" (Rom. v. 5). As heated iron becomes as bright as the fire itself, so a soul in a state of grace partakes of the nature of the Divine fire with which it is consumed, and becomes bright and beautiful in the eyes of God. This heavenly grace cleanses us of our sins, cures our infirmities, beautifies our souls, and makes them temples of the Holy Ghost. "Know you not," says the Apostle, "that you are the temples of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. iii. 16). It is the Divine grace that ennobles all our good works, and renders them worthy of a great reward in the life to come. It raises us to the dignity of children of God, and heirs of an eternal kingdom.

It is of faith, beloved brethren, that the grace by means of which we are justified destroys our sins, eradicating and effacing them altogether. The bad habits that we contracted when we lived a wicked life are not in themselves sinful, and may, if turned to a good account, become the source of great blessings. "What shall we say, then," argues the Apostle. "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. For we that are dead to sin, how shall we live any longer therein? Know you not, that all we who are baptized in Jesus Christ are baptized in His death. For we are buried together with Him by baptism into death, that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, to the end that we may serve sin no longer" (Rom. vi. 1-6). Again, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, the Apostle tells us that our justification partly consists in our being cleansed of our sins. "And such some of you were," he says, "but you are washed, but you are sanctified, but you are justified in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. vi. 11). Luther maintained, beloved brethren, that our justification consisted in our sins not being imputed to us on account of the merits of Christ. Original sin having, according to the heresiarch, totally corrupted the

human race, all the actions of men are vicious and depraved. As the waters that flow from a poisoned source are poisonous, so all our actions are bad, the source from which they proceed having been poisoned through the sin of our first parents. These actions are not, however, imputed to those who are reconciled with Christ. This baneful doctrine has been condemned. Holy Church teaches that we really obtain, through the merits of Christ, forgiveness of our sins; that sanctifying grace eradicates them completely, and renders our souls lovely and beautiful before God. For Christ, says the Apostle, "loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the Word of Life, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. v. 25-27). Our justification does not consist merely in the remission of our sins, or in the justice of Christ being imputed to us. "He saved us," says the Apostle, "by the laver of regeneration and renovation of the Holy Ghost, whom He hath poured forth upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour" (Titus iii. 5, 6).

We must, beloved brethren, dispose ourselves to receive the grace of God. The Council of Trent tells us that a sinner, being first moved by the grace of God to repent of his sins, begins by making an act of faith in all revealed truths. Enlightened from above, he considers the enormity of his sins and fears condign

punishment at the hands of God. The thought, however, of the goodness of God, Who, to save him, gave His only-begotten Son, inspires him with hope. The consideration of the innumerable favours that he has received at the hands of God inflames him with love for his Heavenly Master, kindles in his heart true hatred for the sins of his past life, and animates him with the firm resolution of never committing again a single mortal sin. It is evident from Scripture that certain dispositions are required on the part of those who wish to be reconciled with God. "But if the wicked," says the Prophet, "do penance for all his sins which he hath committed and keep all My commandments, and do judgment, and justice, living he shall live, and shall not die" (Ezek. xviii. 21). It is also evident from Holy Writ that faith alone is not enough. "And if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing" (1 Cor. xiii. 2). We must excite in ourselves faith, hope, the fear of God and confidence in His Divine mercy, sincere love of the Lord, and repentance of our sins.

The confidence that we have that God in His mercy has forgiven us through the merits of His Divine Son must not dispense us from exciting in our hearts the love of our God and true sorrow for having offended Him. Furthermore, the faith that is the root of our justification is that virtue that enables us to believe without doubting whatever God has revealed. It is an act by which we profess our belief in the funda-

mental truths of our holy religion. "Go ye into the whole world," says our Divine Lord, "and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned" (St. Mark xvi. 15, 16).

Without a special revelation we can never, beloved brethren, know for certain that we are in a state of grace, nor are we obliged to believe as an article of faith that we are justified. "Man knoweth not," says Solomon, "whether he be worthy of love or hatred" (Ecclus. ix. 1). This grace can be increased in the soul, and the more it is increased the more beautiful is the soul before God. "He that is just, let him be justified still; and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still" (Apoc. xxii. 11). Our justification is not merely the justice of Christ imputed to us, but something that inheres in the soul, beautifies it, so that like a star it shines with a dazzling splendour in the celestial firmament. This grace can be easily diminished and even lost. "When the just," says the Prophet, "shall depart from His justice and commit iniquities, he shall die in them" (Ezek. xxxiii. 18). We should, therefore, beloved brethren, treasure up this heavenly gift, and continually pray to God for an increase thereof, never forgetting that if we are so unfortunate as to lose this heavenly grace, we may die without it.

AMEN.

XXXV.

ON DIVINE GRACE.

"For by grace you are saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; for it is the gift of God."—EPH. ii. 8.

GRACE, beloved brethren, is a supernatural gift of God freely bestowed upon us for our sanctification and salvation. The good sentiments with which we are animated, and the holy thoughts that inspire us with hatred of sin, proceed from the grace of God. We listen to a sermon, and feel ourselves covered with confusion at the thought of some grievous sin, and take the resolution at once to avoid the dangerous occasions that have so often proved fatal to us. This heavenly light that brings home to us in the most vivid manner the enormity of our past sin is the effect of Divine grace. It is also this same grace that enables us to follow these holy inspirations, to listen to the inward voice that speaks to our hearts, and to execute the resolutions that this heavenly impulse has induced us to take. "It is God," says the Apostle, "Who worketh in you both to will and to accomplish" (Phil. ii. 13). Without this heavenly grace we can do nothing towards our salvation. "I am the vine," says our Divine Lord, "you the branches: he that

abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for without Me you can do nothing" (St. John xv. 5).

It is this grace that enables us to repent of our sins, and to seek in the tribunal of penance reconciliation with God. We cannot have, beloved brethren, one single good thought, or do the least thing that is conducive to our salvation, without the grace of God. "Wherefore I give you to understand," says the Apostle, "that no man can say the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost" (1 Cor. xii. 3). Holy Church has never ceased to inculcate this doctrine. "If anyone," says the Council of Trent, "shall maintain that, without the preventing inspiration and assistance of the Holy Ghost, man can believe, hope, love, or repent in a manner conducive to everlasting life, let him be anathema." This teaching of the Council of Trent in the matter is nothing but an echo of that of the primitive ages. The very moment Pelagius began to dogmatize and to uphold that man could, by his own inward powers, save himself, the Church of God protested against the teaching of the heresiarch, and condemned it, proclaiming, as a revealed truth, the necessity of God's grace in the order of our sanctification. "If anyone," says a Council held in 529, "shall teach that man can, by his natural powers, have a good thought that is conducive to everlasting life, or can consent to the teaching of the Gospel without the light and inspiration of the Holy Ghost, let him know that he is led astray by the spirit

of error." We can, however, by the mere strength of nature, perform certain good works that shall have a reward in this life. Although Divine grace be necessary, in order that our actions may be supernatural and meritorious of everlasting life, we can, by ourselves, unaided by this heavenly grace, perform certain good works. Our nature, having been enfeebled and not vitiated by original sin, is capable of doing good, and of performing, by its own strength, works that aregood in themselves, and deserving a reward in this life. The Apostle could not have accused the Gentiles of having lost the knowledge of God and fallen into idolatry had not their ignorance and infidelity been sinful. They could, therefore, have known God, and paid Him the homage that was His due. "For the invisible things of Him," says the Apostle, "from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, His eternal power also and Divinity, so that they are inexcusable; because that, when they knew God, they have not glorified Him as God" (Rom. i. 20, 21).

The doctrine of Luther that teaches that our nature was radically corrupted by original sin, and that all the actions of one who has not received the gift of faith are sinful, has been condemned by Holy Church. It is certain that man can, by his own strength, perform certain works that are most pleasing in the eyes of God. Do we not read in the first chapter of the Book of Exodus that God rewarded the Egyptian midwives for having saved the Hebrew children?

"But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the King of Egypt had commanded, but saved the men-children. Therefore God dealt well with the midwives" (Exod. i. 17, 20). The holy Fathers are unanimous in teaching this doctrine. St. Augustine himself declares that the Romans received dominion over all nations as a reward for their good deeds. St. Jerome also concluded, from the manner in which God treated the Assyrian king, that heathens are rewarded for the good they do. Besides, it is most absurd to say with Luther that all the actions of those who have not faith are sinful. Reason tells us that the heathen who died to save his country from destruction deserved well at the hands of God.

The just, beloved brethren, cannot during life avoid all venial sin unless by a special grace. "For a just man shall fall seven times, and shall rise again" (Prov. xxiv. 16). "A man cannot," says St. Thomas, "on account of his corruption and sensuality, abstain from all venial sin. Reason may be able to suppress each individual motion of the sensual appetite, but not all, for whilst one is being stifled, another takes us by surprise, so that we can never be sufficiently on our guard against our rebellious nature." Nor can we persevere until the end in the friendship of God without a special grace from above. "Being confident that He Who hath begun a good work in you will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil. i. 6). The grace of God being altogether gratuitous, good works of the natural order do not in the least entitle

us to it. "Or what hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Cor. iv. 7). The followers of Pelagius, having maintained that grace was bestowed upon us as a reward for our good works, were refuted by St. Augustine in these terms: "Why," says the Saint, "is it a grace, unless because it has been granted gratuitously? Why has it been granted gratuitously, unless because there were no merits on our part to entitle us to it, being indebted to the Divine mercy for everything?"—"Quare gratia? Quia gratis datur? Quare gratis datur? Quia merita tua non præcesserunt, sed beneficia Dei te prævenerunt."

AMEN.

XXXVI.

ON CHRIST, OUR HIGH PRIEST.

"Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech."—Heb. vii. 17.

In the ninth chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews, St. Paul gives us a description of the rites and sacrifices of the old law: "Into the first tabernacle the priests indeed always entered, accomplishing the offices of sacrifices. But into the second the high priest alone, once a year, not without blood, which he offereth for his own and the people's ignorance. The Holy Ghost signifying this, that the way into the Holies was not yet made manifest, whilst the former tabernacle was yet standing which is a parable of the time present: according to which gifts and sacrifices are offered, which cannot, as to the conscience make him perfect that serveth, only in meats and drinks" (Heb. ix. 6-9). By these words, we are given to understand that Heaven, represented by the holy of holies, was not yet opened unto us sinners, and that the sacrifices and ceremonies of the old law could not render us worthy of God. But Christ, our High Priest, came and entered into Heaven, the holy of holies, having purchased for us everlasting bliss, not

with the blood of bulls and calves, but with His own most precious blood. "But Christ," says the Apostle, "being come an High Priest of the good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is, not of this creation; neither by the blood of goats or of calves, but by His own blood, entered once into the holies, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. ix. 11, 12). Our Lord was, therefore, our High Priest, Who opened unto us the gates of Heaven by the great sacrifice He offered on the Cross by the shedding of His own blood. He was truly the High Priest of good things to come, having obtained for us, by the great sacrifice that He offered, once for all on Calvary—the forgiveness of our sins, peace and happiness in this life, and everlasting bliss in the world to come. The tabernacle through which He entered the holiest, the abode of the elect, was His own most sacred body, which He delivered up for the salvation of men. "Neither by the blood of goats or of calves, but by His own blood, entered once into the holies; for if the blood of goats and of oxen, and the ashes of an heifer being sprinkled, sanctify such as are defiled to the cleansing of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, Who by the Holy Ghost offered Himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. ix. 12-14). This sacrifice Christ offered on Calvary, dying upon the Cross the ignominious death of a slave. It was offered only once, for a sacrifice demanded the destruction of the victim, and

Christ had only one life to give: "For Jesus is not entered into the holies made with hands, the patterns of the true, but into heaven itself, that He may appear now in the presence of God for us; nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holies every year with the blood of others, for then He ought to have suffered often from the beginning of the world; but now once at the end of ages He hath appeared for the destruction of sin by the sacrifice of Himself: and as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment. So also Christ was offered once to exhaust the sins of many, the second time He shall appear without sin to them that expect Him unto salvation" (Heb. ix. 24-28).

In the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews St. Paul tells us that our Lord is a Priest after the order of Melchisedech, and far superior to the priests of the order of Aaron. He compares the priesthood of Melchisedech and of Christ with that of Aaron, and gives several reasons in order to convince the Jews of the superiority of the former: "And then also," says the Apostle, "King of Salem, that is King of Peace, without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but likened unto the Son of God, continueth a priest for ever" (Heb. vii. 3). No mention is made of the beginning or end of the life of this great pontiff, or of his ancestors, to indicate that he was like the Son of God, Whose priesthood is eternal, and consequently

far superior to the priesthood of the tribe of Levi. Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedech, confessing thereby that the priest of Salem was above him and all his descendants. Further, the blessing that Abraham received from Melchisedech was an acknowledgment on his part of the eminence and great virtue of that illustrious pontiff. "And without all contradiction," says the Apostle, "that which is less, is blessed by the better" (Heb. vii. 7). Again, it is evident that the Levitical priesthood was not perfect, otherwise there would have been no occasion to establish another. "If then perfection was by the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchisedech, and not be called according to the order of Aaron?" (Heb. vii. 11). The old law did not sanctify, it only purified, the flesh; but the law of Christ, the new priesthood, penetrates into the very soul, and purges us from dead works, so that we may be enabled to serve the living God. He came to be a light unto the Gentiles, and a source of consolation to the helpless of every age, to teach us the way to Heaven, and to provide us with the means of sanctification in this life and glory in the next. Another reason why Jesus is a greater Pontiff than Aaron, or his descendants, is that God bestowed the dignity of priesthood upon Him with an oath, and we only take an oath in things of the greatest moment. "And inasmuch as it is not without an oath, for others indeed were made priests

without an oath, but this with an oath by Him that said unto Him: The Lord hath sworn, and He will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever. By so much is Jesus made a surety of a better testament" (Heb. vii. 20-22). Another argument in favour of Christ is that He is immortal, and that His priesthood endureth for ever, whilst the priests of the old order were not suffered to continue by reason of death. But Christ liveth for ever, and hath an unchangeable priesthood. True, there are ministers who officiate here below, but Christ is the High Priest, the Supreme Pontiff, and all is done in His Name. In the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which is the same as that of the Cross, the Chief Priest is Christ, so that when the words of consecration are pronounced by the priest, the Bread and Wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, by the power of God to Whom nothing is impossible.

Christ was a Priest after the order of Melchisedech, and we read in Genesis that Melchisedech offered bread and wine. Therefore our Divine Lord, the night before He died, "taking bread He gave thanks, and brake, and gave to them, saying, This is My Body which is given for you. Do this for a commemoration of Me. In like manner the Chalice also after He had supped, saying, This is the Chalice, the New Testament in My Blood, which shall be shed for you" (St. Luke xxii. 19, 20). This sacrifice, which is offered daily upon our altars, is the one alluded to by the prophet in the following terms: "From the

rising of the sun, even to the going down, My Name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice and there is offered to My Name a clean oblation; for My Name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Mal. i. 11). How careful we should be to be present when this Holy Sacrifice is being offered up! With what feelings of reverence and love should we not prostrate ourselves before that hidden God Who never ceases to renew in our midst the great Sacrifice of the Cross! Let us adore our Blessed Lord here present on our altars; let us praise Him, and invite all the angels of Heaven to join us in proclaiming Him our Lord and our God.

AMEN.

XXXVII.

ON THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

"Jesus, having loved His own, who were in the world, He loved them unto the end."—St. John xiii. 1.

We cannot allow the Feast of the Sacred Heart to pass by without saying a few words on the devotion that we should all have for the Divine Heart of Jesus.

The object of this devotion is the Sacred Heart of Jesus, united hypostatically with His Divinity. His Sacred Heart being an integral part of His humanity, which is hypostatically united with the Divinity, the homage that we pay it is paid to the Divine Person itself. We honour the Heart of Jesus, because it is the Heart of a God Incarnate, and this God we honour each time that we do homage to His Immaculate Heart. The Heart is the special object of our homage, because the Heart is the symbol of love, and our devotion to the Sacred Heart springs from our consciousness of the immense love with which the Sacred Heart of Jesus was animated for the whole human race. He loved them unto the end, and proved His love by dying the ignominious death of the Cross for the salvation of men. It was love that

induced Jesus to institute the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, where He offers Himself to His Heavenly Father in an unbloody manner for the living and the dead. By means of this sacrifice He becomes our Guest and our Food. He is our Victim and our Priest, and offers Himself in this mysterious manner for our salvation. He is also our Spiritual Food. He feeds us with His own Body and Blood, so that we may live for ever. "If any man eat of this Bread he shall live for ever" (St. John vi. 52).

The Heart of Jesus is free from all stain of sin. Composed of the blood of the Immaculate Mary, it was as pure as the crystal waters of living streams. Besides, it was always united hypostatically with the Word, and could not sin. "Which of you shall convince Me of sin?" (St. John viii. 46) are the words used by our Divine Lord Himself when He challenged His enemies to convince Him of sin, to bring against Him the smallest charge. Pilate himself confessed to His innocence, when he declared publicly that he found no cause in Him. Jesus was free not only from sin, but from all temptation, from all thought of sin. He was free also from all the effects of sin, from concupiscence, and all propensity to evil. We all feel the stings of the flesh; we all sinned in Adam. St. Paul himself groaned under the weight of sin, and never ceased to ask God to protect him, so that whilst he preached to others, he might not become a castaway. This rebellion of the flesh our Lord did not know. He could not sin. Although

sinless, He was the most humble of the children of men. He sought not His own glory, but that of His Heavenly Father. His mother was a poor woman. When He grew up, He chose for companions poor fishermen. He lived the life of a poor man, associating with labourers, whom He had chosen to be the ministers of the Gospel. He was also obedient to His Heavenly Father in all things. "Let this Chalice pass from me. Nevertheless not as I will but as Thou wilt" (St. Matt. xxvi. 39). He obeyed a poor mechanic, Joseph the carpenter. He obeyed His enemies. When Caiphas asked Him whether He was the Son of God, He declared that He was, and His answer cost Him His life. He was even obedient to His executioners, stretching, at their command, His hands upon the Cross, and allowing them to be pierced through with enormous nails.

The tenderness of the Heart of Jesus is great indeed. He prayed on the Cross for those who placed him thereon. "Come to Me," He says on another occasion, "all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (St. Matt. xi. 28). We see Him shed tears at the tomb of Lazarus. Also as he entered Jerusalem, some few days before His Passion, He began to weep as He recalled to mind the fate of that unfortunate city. "Jerusalem! Jerusalem!" exclaimed the Son of God, "how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldest not" (St. Matt. xxiii. 37). He was truly tender-hearted.

After having preached the whole day to thousands of His fellow-countrymen, He could not bear the idea of sending them away without providing for their temporal wants. Thus, to feed them in the desert, where they had spent hours suspended on His lips, He worked a most stupendous miracle, feeding five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes. Let us imitate this Divine Model. Let us love one another, for we are all members of His Mystical Body, we have been all redeemed by the Blood of Christ. He prayed that we should be all one, as He and the Father are One. Do we pray that all men should be united, and embrace the one Church, that Church which Christ founded, and against which the gates of hell shall never prevail? Do we set others a good example? We are not free from sin, but through the Divine grace we may become saints, and bring down upon the members of the Church great blessings. We can all of us become saints. We all have at our disposal the means of sanctification, prayer, and the Sacraments of the Church, which are the channels through which the graces of God are communicated to our souls. Our Lord frequently passed whole nights in prayer. He did this to set us an example. Let us, therefore, pray and imitate our Divine Master in all things—His humility, His patience under trials, His obedience, His charity, His meekness, and great tenderness of heart. Thus we shall honour that Divine Heart that still lives for us, and that never ceases to implore the Father of all light to have pity upon us.

AMEN.

XXXVIII.

ON THE DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

"Be light made, and light was made."—GEN. i. 3.

GOD created all things. The sun, moon, stars—all things, visible and invisible—were created by God. He made them all for His own glory. "Thou art worthy to receive glory and honour and power because Thou hast created all things" (Rev. iv. 11). Man, who alone of all earthly beings can understand the mysteries of the Godhead, is bound to pay God homage, and to proclaim His glory to all creatures. Not only did God create all things, but He continues to give them life. Left to themselves, all creatures would cease to exist, and fall into their original nothingness. "Upholding all things by the Word of His power" (Heb. i. 3). This God, Who has given life to all living beings, can also destroy them. "For He doth according to His will, as well with the powers of heaven as among the inhabitants of the earth" (Dan. iv. 32). His omnipotence is written on every page of history. The angels rebelled against His will, and were at once banished from His presence. Our first parents incurred His Divine anger by eating

of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. This sin entailed upon them and their descendants fearful woes. The Deluge is a memorable witness of the vengeance that God wreaks upon those who offend Him. For forty days and forty nights the cataracts of the deep were opened; the earth was so completely flooded that every living being perished, with the exception of Noe and his family and the animals saved in the ark. Again, the history of the Israelites in Egypt is a striking proof of the omnipotence of the Almighty. Moses strikes the Nile, and its waters are turned into blood. The most deadly plagues afflict the land, and at last Pharaoh is compelled to let go the people of God. They come to the Red Sea. Moses stretches his rod over its waters, and his people are able to pass over as if they were on dry land. The Egyptians following them are lost. In the desert God feeds His people with bread from heaven. And to slake their thirst Moses strikes the rock, and immediately a living stream gushes forth.

The history of our Divine Lord is also full of wonderful deeds. He calms the tempest, He walks upon the waters, cures all kinds of diseases, and even raises the dead to life. God gives life to all beings, and without Him they can do nothing. "Who maketh the grass to grow on the mountains" (Ps. cxlvi. 8). "Neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase" (1 Cor. iii. 7). He governs all things.

"For He doth according to His will, as well with the powers of heaven as among the inhabitants of the earth" (Dan. iv. 32). His care is extended to every living being. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father" (St. Matt. x. 29). Yes, the Divine Providence of God provides for all His creatures. By Divine Providence I mean the Divine Will directing all things toward the end for which they were made. This Providence supposes, then, His wisdom, which knows all things and the means suited to that end for which they were created; and His goodness, which is anxious to secure the welfare of every creature, and to provide it with means proportioned to its needs. The Divine Providence supposes also that God is powerful enough to enable every being to attain the end that He had in view in creating it. Thus, God's Providence provides for every creature, and protects it against all dangers. "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they labour not, neither do they spin, but I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. And if the grass of the field which is to-day and to-morrow is cast into the oven, God doth so clothe, how much more you, O ye of little faith!" (St. Matt. vi. 28-30). God protects all beings. "He hath given His angels charge over Thee lest Thou dash Thy foot against a stone" (Ps. xc. 11, 12). The Church is a living witness of the truth of this doctrine. The Divine Providence guided the

Church from the very beginning. The poor fishermen whom Jesus had chosen to found His Church never could have succeeded had not God protected them. To-morrow we celebrate the Feast of the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, and these two Apostles remind us of the wonderful ways of God. Peter and John, on entering the Temple, met with a beggar who had been a cripple from his infancy. "Silver and gold I have none," says St. Peter, "but what I have I give thee: in the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise and walk" (Acts iii. 6). The cripple was restored to perfect health, and entered the temple to thank God. Meantime, Peter addressed an immense crowd that had witnessed this miracle, and converted five thousand men. He preached Jesus, and told them that God had raised Him from the dead. The eloquence of a poor fisherman was enough to convert in one day eight thousand Jews. It was not Peter's work; it was the work of the Divine Spirit. The other Apostles imitated St. Peter. They preached the Gospel in different cities. The Gospel spread, and in a few years the whole heathen world was converted. As at the Creation the Spirit of God hovered over the waters and made them pregnant, so in the beginning of Christianity the same Spirit gave increase to the word of the Apostles. The same Divine Providence watches over the Church of God. The Church may be exposed to great dangers, it may apparently be upon the point of perishing, but at the will of Heaven the storm is calmed, and the bark of

Peter appears floating majestically on the troubled waters of a boisterous ocean. Christ Himself tells us that the Divine Providence will not allow the bark of Peter to perish. The gates of hell shall not prevail against his Church.

AMEN.

XXXIX.

ON HOPE, DESPAIR, AND PRESUMPTION.

"Therefore, if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God: mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth."—Col. iii. 1, 2.

Hope, beloved brethren, is the desire of salvation, accompanied with a firm confidence of obtaining it, through the help of God's grace. Our hope must be accompanied with a firm confidence in God's mercy. If we desired salvation, and despaired attaining it, we should not have hope. This confidence with which we are animated is the work of God's grace. Of ourselves, we are incapable of one single act of hope. We should, therefore, pray to God to grant us the grace that will enable us to hope in Him, and to place entire confidence in His Divine promise. The object of hope is God Himself, the beatific vision, and the means by which we are enabled to save our souls. Our hope is founded on the promise of a merciful and omnipotent God. God, in His mercy, has promised salvation to all those who serve Him faithfully, and this promise He is able and willing to keep. "For God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish,

but may have life everlasting. For God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by Him" (St. John iii. 16, 17).

We may, beloved brethren, have hope without charity. The love that animates those that trust in God is not necessarily that of charity. They may love God, not for Himself, not for His infinite perfections, but for the good things He has in store for them. Hope, however, is made perfect by charity. In hell there is no hope, and this utter loss of hope is the chief cause of the sufferings of the damned. Heretics that are not in an invincible state of ignorance, not being animated with true faith, cannot possess that hope that is conducive to salvation. The elect have not hope, for they possess God, Who is the object of their desires, and unto them the source of endless happiness. We lose this heavenly virtue by despair and presumption. To despair is to distrust God's mercy, to lose all confidence in Him, all hope of Heaven, and of securing the means of salvation. This was the sin of Judas. He was so horrified at the thought of having sold his Master for thirty pieces of silver, that he went and hanged himself. It is, beloved brethren, a great sin, being opposed to the infinite mercy of God, to that immense love that induced Him to sacrifice His only-begotten Son on behalf of fallen man. Should we ever feel ourselves despondent and tempted to lose hope, let us prostrate ourselves at the feet of Jesus. The sight of a crucifix, the thought of the sufferings of Christ, of the love

He bore each one of us, will inspire us with confidence in God and in His infinite goodness.

Presumption is a rash expectation of salvation; we are guilty of presumption if we hope to be saved without any efforts on our part, or through our own powers alone, and independently of the grace of God. Those, also, are guilty of presumption who live in a state of sin, trusting to certain good works to obtain from God the grace to die a happy death. To overcome this evil propensity, it is necessary for us to meditate frequently on the Divine justice, and to recall to our minds the fearful example of innumerable sinners who, dying in their sins, have been condemned to everlasting perdition. We should, beloved brethren, work out our salvation in fear and trembling. According to St. Thomas, there are different kinds of fear. There is that worldly fear, *timor mundanus*, by which we offend God, in order to avoid some temporal loss, or not to lose the esteem of men. This fear is sinful and most displeasing to Heaven. By servile fear, we mean the fear that prevents our falling into sin for fear of the punishments that God has in store for those who offend Him. Filial fear is that with which children are animated towards their parents. We fear to sin lest we should incur the displeasure of God, and be separated from Him. Servile fear is a thing good in itself. "And fear ye not them," says our Lord, "that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear Him that can destroy both soul and

body in hell" (St. Matt. x. 28). Holy Church inculcates this doctrine in the following terms: "If anyone," says the Council of Trent, "will maintain that the fear of hell by which we fly to the Divine mercy, and repent of our sins, is something sinful, or renders sinners worse, let him be anathema." The words that St. Gregory the Great addressed to a lady, who had asked him to obtain from heaven an assurance that her sins were forgiven, bring home to us what was the teaching of the Fathers on this subject. These are his words: "You ask what is both difficult and unprofitable—difficult, because I am unworthy to receive any revelation; unprofitable, because an absolute assurance of your pardon does not suit your state, till you can no longer weep for your sins. You ought always to fear and tremble for them, and wash them away by daily tears. Paul had been taken up to the third heaven, yet trembled lest he should become a reprobate. Security is the mother of negligence." Of course, if a sinner were to be so disposed as to be ready to sin, were there no place of punishment in the world to come, his repentance would be insincere, and the fears with which he was animated mere hypocrisy.

We should, beloved brethren, make acts of hope as soon as we come to the use of reason, at the hour of death, and frequently during life. We should also make acts of hope when we are tempted against this, or other virtues, when we receive the Sacraments, and especially, each time that we approach the Most

Holy Sacrament of the altar. We should never cease to pray to God for this heavenly gift. The thought of the heavenly reward that God has in store for those who serve Him faithfully will support us in our trials, and enable us to continue the good fight unto the end. "Know you not," says the Apostle, "that they that run in the race, all run, indeed, but one receiveth the prize? So run that you may obtain. And everyone that striveth for the mastery refraineth himself from all things: and they, indeed, that they may receive a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible one. I, therefore, so run, not as at an uncertainty; I so fight not as one beating the air; but I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps when I have preached to others, I myself should become a cast-away" (1 Cor. ix. 24-27).

AMEN.

XL.

ON THE EFFICACY OF OUR GOOD WORKS.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord, the Just Judge, will render to me in that day; and not only to me, but to them also that love His coming."—2 TIM. iv. 7, 8.

A MAN that is in a state of grace, beloved brethren, being incorporated in Christ, produces acts that are worthy of everlasting life. Strengthened with the grace of God, the just man performs works that will entitle him to an everlasting reward at the hands of God. In the eyes of Protestants none of our actions are meritorious. The doctrine that teaches that our good works will be rewarded in the world to come, is, if we may believe those heretics, most injurious to Jesus Christ. Man having been totally corrupted by original sin, all his actions, even those that are inspired by the Divine Spirit, are, according to Luther, vicious, poisonous, emanating as they do from a poisoned source, from the depraved nature of man. It is, therefore, in the eyes of Luther, impious for men to pretend to merit, by their good works, an everlasting reward, their most noble actions being

tainted by the source from which they proceed. We can, therefore, beloved brethren, easily understand those words of Luther: "Pecca fortiter, et crede fortius." Sin boldly, but believe more boldly: trust that thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be saved. For the actions of men, be they just men or unjust, are all sinful, the only difference being that those of the former are not imputed to them, as long as they are united to Christ, Whose righteousness covers them, as it were, with a mantle that protects them against the anger of an irritated God. "Omne opus justi," says Luther, "damnabile est, et peccatum mortale, si judicio Dei judicetur"—"Every act of a just man is sinful, if it be judged by the judgment of God." It was quite natural that this destructive doctrine should captivate the minds of sensual men, and induce them to rise in rebellion against a Church that preached mortification, self-denial, and the necessity of waging a perpetual war against the human passions.

The Council of Trent, beloved brethren, expresses itself on this important subject in the following terms: As the head its members, and the vine its branches, so Jesus affects the just with His Divine influence and heavenly grace. His grace never ceases to prevent and accompany all their good works, so that without it they could never be pleasing to God, or meritorious. This righteousness is ours, because by it we are justified; it is also the righteousness of God, because it is God that communicates it to us, through the

merits of His Divine Son. Our good works are meritorious, for they are vivified by the grace of God, receiving all their efficacy from the Divine promise and merits of Christ. When, therefore, God crowns us for our good works, it is His own grace, His own favours, that He crowns. As the fruit of the branch belongs to the vine, so all our good works belong to Christ, for from Him they receive that vital sap that vivifies them, and renders them worthy of an everlasting reward. "Cum Deus," says St. Augustine, "coronat merita nostra, nihil aliud coronat quam munera sua." It is of faith, beloved brethren, that the just merit by their good works everlasting life. "If any one shall maintain," says the Council of Trent, "that the just, for the good works they perform in the Lord, must not hope and expect an everlasting reward, through the mercy and merits of Christ, if they will only persevere until the end in doing good and in keeping the commandments, let him be anathema." "If any one shall say that the righteous, by the good works that he performs, through the grace of God and the merits of Christ, of Whom he is a living member, does not deserve everlasting life, and an increase thereof, let him be anathema." This doctrine, beloved brethren, that our good works entitle us to an everlasting reward in the world to come, is founded on sacred Scripture. St. Paul exhorts the Corinthians to run so as to be crowned. "Know you not," says the Apostle, "that they that run in the race indeed all run, but one receiveth the prize. So

run that you may obtain it" (1 Cor. ix. 24). And in his Epistle to Timothy the language he uses can have but one meaning: "I have fought," says the Apostle, "a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. As to the rest there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord, the Just Judge, will render to me in that day, and not only to me, but to them also that love His coming" (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8). Further, he tells us that everyone shall receive his reward according to his labours, and as there is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, so also will it be in the resurrection of the dead. The holy Fathers inculcate the same doctrine. "We must not," says St. Augustine, "expect the prize until we have deserved it." "Non debemus poscere præmium, antequam mereamus accipere."

"I must work the works of Him that sent Me," says our Divine Lord; "the night cometh when no man can work" (St. John ix. 4). It is only in this world, beloved brethren, that we can perform meritorious works, and, furthermore, we must be in a state of grace to do anything worthy of an everlasting reward. "Whatsoever thy hand is able to do," says Solomon, "do it earnestly, for neither work, nor reason, nor wisdom, nor knowledge, shall be in hell, whither thou art hastening" (Ecclus. ix. 10). The necessity of our being in a state of grace in order to perform meritorious works, is frequently inculcated in the New Testament. "Abide in Me," says

our Lord, "and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you the branches; he that abideth in Me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing. If any one abide not in Me, he shall be cast forth, as a branch, and shall wither. You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and have appointed you, that you should go, and should bring forth fruit, and your fruit should remain" (St. John xv. 4-6, 16). Again the same doctrine is impressed upon us by the great Apostle of the Gentiles. "And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" (1 Cor. xiii. 3). It is only the good works that we perform in a state of grace, and with the intention of honouring God, that will have a reward in the world to come. Although sanctifying grace, beloved brethren, and all actual graces that prepare us for the infusion thereof, are altogether gratuitous gifts of Heaven, we can, nevertheless, when in a state of grace, merit at the hands of God an everlasting reward, and an increase of His Divine grace in this life. We can also by our prayers induce God to grant unto sinners the graces that will convert and save them. How careful we should therefore be, beloved brethren, to pray for all sinners, for infidels, and heretics, and to ask God to enlighten them, so

that they may see the error of their ways, and embrace the sweet yoke of Jesus Christ. "Come to Me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you" (St. Matt. xi. 28).

AMEN.

XLI.

ON PRAYER.

"Ask, and it shall be given you; knock, and it shall be opened to you."—St. Matt. vii. 7.

Beloved brethren, we should, during this holy season of Lent, have recourse frequently to prayer. We should pray often during the day, and never cease to implore God to grant us those graces that we stand in need of. Are we not surrounded by innumerable enemies? Are we not exposed to a thousand dangers? St. John tells us that we have to contend with three great enemies: the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and pride of life. By concupiscence of the flesh the Apostle means the lusts of the flesh, which we can only overcome through the Divine assistance which is granted to all who ask it. Left to ourselves, and unaided by the Divine grace, we necessarily become the victims and sport of our own passions, and fall sometimes so low that it requires a miracle to save us. St. Paul, on his way to Damascus, was struck with a light from heaven, and heard a voice: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" (Acts ix. 4). The voice of God touched the heart of Paul, and from being the enemy of the name of

Christ, he became the great Apostle of the Gentiles. The hand of God is manifest in this conversion; it needed a miracle to open his eyes and to make him understand the error of his ways. To convert the sinner whose mind has been depraved, and whose days are spent in luxury and vice, a still greater grace is required, and a miracle alone will bring him to a sense of duty. But we need not despair of obtaining this grace, if we only ask it of God. The other evil that we have to contend with is concupiscence of the eyes. Our Lord tells us that it is easier for a camel to enter the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Riches are a source of evil, for they are not always justly acquired, and, besides, they enable the rich man to gratify all his passions. Centred in self, the rich man forgets his Creator, and lives only to accumulate riches, which can never satisfy the cravings of a heart made for God alone. If we pray, we shall receive from the Lord that heavenly light that will make us understand the folly of hoarding perishable goods, and the importance of living for that kingdom that shall have no end, for that God Who will reward with an immortal crown the days that we may have spent in His service here below. Let us pray, and the grace of God will enlighten us and fortify our will, so that, inflamed with Divine love, we shall, like the Apostles of old, rejoice that we have been deemed worthy to sacrifice all that we possess for the sacred cause of Holy Church.

The other great evil alluded to by the Apostle is

pride of life. Pride is an inordinate esteem of self. The proud man is so elated that he feels contempt for his fellow-men. Full of arrogance, he imagines himself independent of God, Whom he offends mortally by refusing to acknowledge Him as his Lord and Master, and to pay Him homage for the intellectual gifts and worldly goods with which Heaven has blessed him. Enlightened by heavenly wisdom, the proud man will soon humble himself, and confess that he is the most unworthy of men. The light that God has granted him on account of one fervent prayer will make him see the folly of priding himself on his good qualities, and of arrogating to himself the gifts of God. He will soon confess that he is indebted to God for everything that he possesses, and for life itself. He will perfectly understand that he has been, in the words of St. Bernard, "an impure seed"; that he is an unclean vessel, and that he will become one day the food of unclean insects; that he depends on God for his very existence; and that if the Divine Providence were to cease to give him breath, to be his support, his staff of life, he would cease to exist. Prayer is necessary for all those who wish to live a spiritual life. We cannot, without God's grace, live this spiritual life; nor, without it, can we persevere in God's friendship. We cannot, unaided by His heavenly grace, even pronounce the sweet name of Jesus so that our doing so may be beneficial to us in the world to come; and this gift, this heavenly treasure, is given abundantly to those who pray. And much grace is lost when prayer

is neglected. It, therefore, follows that prayer is necessary to salvation. What heat is to the body prayer is to the soul. It is by heat that the food that we take is turned into blood, and when the body loses its natural heat and no remedy can be found to restore it, the days of man are numbered. So it is in the spiritual life. Everything that we receive at the hands of men—praise, blame, scorn, and contempt—is digested, is converted by prayer, and becomes the stay of our spiritual life. But let men cease to pray, and all such occasions of merit are lost, and the sufferings and trials that God meant for our sanctification prove to be the occasion of our perdition. Prayer is like Jacob's ladder, which rested upon the earth and reached the heavens, the angels of the Lord descending and ascending thereon. The moment that we prostrate ourselves before God our prayers are wafted to Heaven on angels' wings. Like sweet incense our supplications ascend to the throne of God; and heavenly favours, spiritual graces of a priceless value, fall upon us like the dew of heaven. The example of our Lord Himself ought to encourage us to pray. See Him in the Garden of Olives. He lies prostrate on the ground, and His agony is so intense that He is covered with blood from head to foot. He shudders at the thought of the dreadful suffering that He is about to undergo. In a short time one of His own disciples will betray Him into the hands of His mortal enemies, and will receive as a reward for his treachery thirty pieces of silver. All His friends will forsake

Him in the hour of trial, and His chosen Apostle will deny Him thrice at the voice of a female servant. Peter will swear that he knows not the Galilean. The night that He is about to pass in the courtyard of the high priest, the scourging at the pillar, the crowning with thorns, His cruel death upon the Cross—all this rushes in upon His mind, and fills Him with gloom and consternation. Besides, the sins of men for whom He must suffer, the hideous deeds, the black ingratitude of His chosen people, the thought that His blood would be shed in vain, and be useless to a vast number of men, produced in His soul a fearful agony, His nature standing aghast at such a sight, and His will causing His feeling to obey the eternal decrees of Heaven. In this dreadful agony He had recourse to God by prayer, and the Lord sent His angel to console Him. Let us follow the example of our Divine Lord. In our trials, in our temptations, let us raise our hearts to God, let us implore His protection; and, depend upon it, we shall not do so in vain. The Lord will hasten to our assistance, He will send His angel to protect us, and to guide us to the heavenly Jerusalem, where we shall receive at the hands of God that inheritance that He has in store for the elect.

AMEN.

XLII.

ON PRAYER.

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you."—St. Matt. vii. 7.

In the "Our Father" our Divine Lord Himself teaches us how to pray. In this beautiful prayer is contained everything that we stand in need of. Our first petition is that God may be known, honoured, and glorified by all men: "Hallowed be Thy Name." We then pray that we may be glorified in Him: "Thy kingdom come"; that we may possess Him and true happiness in this world, and everlasting bliss in the world to come. We also ask God to confer upon us the means that will enable us to attain the end for which we have been created, to give us His Divine grace, by means of which we shall perform works worthy of everlasting life: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread." We also implore God to remove all obstacles that may stand in the way of our salvation, to forgive us our sins, and to protect us against the innumerable dangers by which we are surrounded: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but

deliver us from evil. Amen" (St. Matt. vi. 9-13). We, therefore, beloved brethren, can easily understand that this prayer is most perfect, containing as it does everything that we require. It is a prayer that we should address frequently to Heaven.

We must, beloved brethren, pray incessantly. Theologians teach that the grace of God is necessary to salvation. We cannot, they tell us, unless through this Divine grace, perform one single work that will entitle us to an everlasting reward. This grace, this heavenly gift, that ennobles all our actions, is as a rule granted only to those who pray. It, therefore, follows that if we wish to be saved, if we wish to persevere until the end in the friendship of God, we must pray incessantly, we must never cease to ask God to grant us His heavenly grace, that seed of immortality. Besides, are we not surrounded by innumerable dangers? are we not continually tempted to sin by the most violent temptations? are not the devil, the world, and the flesh up in arms against us? And how are we to overcome these ruthless enemies of our immortal souls if left to ourselves, and unprotected by the Divine assistance? No, beloved brethren, we cannot overcome, unless through the grace of God, which He only grants to those who ask it. The example of the saints, the example of our Divine Lord Himself, should encourage us to pray. He prayed continually, passing whole nights in prayer, not that He required the least assistance, but in order to set us an example, and to instil into our minds the

importance of this holy exercise. We should begin the day, beloved brethren, by putting ourselves in the presence of God, and prostrating ourselves before His heavenly throne. We should ask Him to bless us and whatever occupation our position in life may entail upon us. Frequently during the day we should raise our hearts to God by means of ejaculatory prayer, invoking His protection, praising His sacred name, and inviting all creatures to praise and glorify Him. All Christians are obliged to pray as soon as they come to the use of reason, frequently during life, when tempted, and especially at the hour of death. We should pray for ourselves and our families, our bishops and priests, for all Christians, for heretics and sinners. Charity forbids us to exclude anyone from our prayers, even our mortal enemies. We should also pray for the souls in purgatory. We should pray that the just may persevere, that sinners may be converted, and that heretics may embrace the true religion. In our prayers we should invoke the Divine protection, and also that of the saints and angels in Heaven. We pray to the saints and angels to intercede for us and to obtain at the hands of God, on our behalf, the graces that we require in order to work out our salvation. We should never forget to invoke the protection of our Blessed Lady. Being the Mother of God, she must have great influence with her Divine Son, Who cannot refuse her any favours she may ask on behalf of poor sinners. If at His Mother's prayer He worked a miracle in Cana of Galilee, in order to

supply the marriage feast with wine, what will He not do if invoked by her to have pity upon those souls for whose sakes He shed His most precious blood? In our prayers, we ask first of all spiritual favours, the grace of God, the salvation of our souls; and then for temporal ones, should Heaven deem it expedient to grant them. Our prayers being efficacious inasmuch as they are united with the prayer of our Divine Lord, we should offer them up in conformity with those He addressed to His Heavenly Father on our behalf. He prayed for our salvation, that we might be holy, as His Heavenly Father is holy, that we might be one, as He and the Father are One. These are the blessings that we should ask God to grant us; and if we only ask them in a becoming manner, and in the Name of our dear Lord and Saviour, God is sure to bestow them upon us. How, then, are we to pray? With humility, remembering that we are in the presence of God, of that God before Whom the angels themselves tremble. "The prayer of the humble pierceth the clouds." The prayer of the humble publican, who cried out, striking his breast, "O Lord, be merciful to me a sinner" (St. Luke xviii. 13), was so pleasing to Heaven, that he was justified forthwith. We should also pray with great confidence in God, having always impressed upon our minds the words of our Divine Lord, Who tells us that whatever we shall ask the Father in His Name will be granted unto us. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be

opened unto you" (St. Matt. vii. 7). We should also persevere in our prayers. God does not immediately grant our petitions; He wants us to reiterate them, and manifest thereby the great confidence with which we are animated towards Him. We should imitate the disciples of Emmaus, and constrain, as it were, our Divine Lord to lend a favourable ear to our supplications. Christ hesitated at first to accept their invitation to abide with them, but as they insisted, telling Him that the day was far spent, He consented, and being seated at table with them, He gave them to eat of the bread that He had blessed and broken. "And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him, and He vanished out of their sight. And they said one to the other: Was not our heart burning within us whilst He spoke in the way, and opened to us the Scriptures?" (St. Luke xxiv. 31, 32).

What a grace this perseverance obtained for those two disciples of Emmaus! Again, the manner in which the woman of Canaan implored our Lord to deliver her daughter from the devil should teach us how necessary it is for us to persevere in our prayers. Upon our Lord saying that He was sent only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and that it was not meet to cast to the dogs the bread of children, she exclaimed: "Yea, Lord, for the whelps eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters" (St. Matt. xv. 2), meaning that though unworthy of the smallest favour, she had the greatest confidence in Jesus, for she knew that the slightest effort on

His part would be sufficient to save her daughter, and deliver her from the power of the evil one. So touched was the Heart of Jesus at her humble and fervent prayer, that He granted her request at once. "O woman," said Jesus, "great is thy faith, be it done to thee as thou wilt. And her daughter was cured from that hour" (St. Matt. xv. 28). We should avoid being distracted in our prayers, placing ourselves, the moment we enter church, in the presence of God, and banishing from our minds all worldly thoughts. "When you go to church," says St. Bernard, "lay your hand upon your mouth, and say: 'Stay here at the door bad thoughts, criminal desires, irregular affections, and carnal concupiscences, but you, my soul, enter into the joy of my Master, and of your God, that you may know the will of your Lord, and visit His holy temple.'" As our distractions proceed generally from want of preparation, on our way to church we should recollect ourselves, and prepare for prayer, and for the Holy Sacrifice that we are about to offer up in union with the priest. They also proceed from the infirmity of nature, it being difficult for man to have his mind fixed upon spiritual things for any length of time, and from the devil, who, knowing the efficacy of prayer, does his utmost to make us loathe an exercise so holy, which, if well performed, will be the means of our salvation. We should not, however, lose heart on account of our distractions, knowing that, if they are involuntary, they are not sinful. But, being impressed with the necessity of prayer, of raising

our hearts to God, of imploring His protection, and of asking Him to bless us and those whom He has entrusted to our care, let us, like the blind man of the Gospel, never cease to cry out in our trials and tribulations: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me" (St. Mark x. 47).

AMEN.

XLIII.

ON CHARITY.

"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." —1 Cor. xiii. 1.

Charity is an infused virtue that makes us love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbours as ourselves for the love of God. We love God, beloved brethren, on account of His infinite perfections, we love Him because He is the most beautiful of beings. We can also love the Almighty for the innumerable favours, both of the natural and supernatural order, that He has conferred upon us. Not only did God create us, but He raised us to the dignity of children, having redeemed us with the blood of His Divine Son, and made us heirs of heaven and everlasting life. We should prefer God to all things, and be ready to die rather than offend Him by one mortal sin. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind" (St. Matt. xxii. 37). We should love God with our whole soul, having Him always in view as our supreme end, and devoting to His service all our faculties, our understanding, our

memory, and our will, being ever ready to die for Him, and rejoicing at the sufferings to which we are exposed on account of His Holy Name. "Who," says the Apostle, "then, shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or persecution, or the sword? For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. viii. 35-39). We should frequently make acts of charity, and especially when tempted to offend God by hatred of His Holy Name, and at the hour of death. If we possess this heavenly virtue, we shall feel grieved at the thought of losing our God by sin, or of doing the least thing that can give Him offence. Charity vivifies all other virtues. Without it they are all dead, at least, as far as Heaven is concerned; but, animated with charity, they produce works that are meritorious of everlasting life. What the sun is to creation charity is to our spiritual life. The moment the rising sun sheds his rays over the earth everything is cheerful and bright. The whole creation, awakening from its torpor, becomes animated and full of life. So is it in the supernatural world. The moment charity abides in us our whole spiritual being is transformed. Our actions are vivified and rendered deserving of an immortal and unfading crown. "Charity," says St. Thomas, "is the mother, the

root and fountainhead, whence the other virtues have their origin, inasmuch as it stamps them all with that Divine character which renders them worthy of an everlasting reward." There are three degrees in this Divine love. The first, which must be possessed by all who desire to be saved, inspires us with a hatred of mortal sin; the second makes us hate not only mortal, but venial sin, so that Christians who are animated with this holy love are ready to die rather than commit one single venial sin; the third degree of charity not only inspires us with a hatred of mortal and venial sin, but inflames us with the desire of seeking in everything the greater glory of God, and of risking our very lives in order to promote His honour, and make His Name glorified by all men. This heavenly virtue is acquired by prayer and mortification, by meditating on the Divine attributes, on the goodness of God, and on the Passion of our Divine Lord. "Above all, sweet Jesus," says St. Bernard, "do Thou give me a relish for the bitter chalice of Thy sorrowful Passion. This it is that most easily wins our love, most sweetly ravishes our affection, most justly claims it, binds it most powerfully, kindles it most vehemently."

We are also obliged to love our neighbour as ourselves. We are obliged to assist him in his wants, both spiritual and temporal. We are also obliged to love our enemies, and to forgive them whatever injury they may have done us. "Love your enemies," says our Divine Lord; "do good to them

that hate you" (St. Matt. v. 44). We are, therefore, obliged to pray for our enemies and assist them in their wants. We should never entertain animosity towards them, or injure them in their business or profession. We may, however, treat them with coolness for a time, in order to make them feel the wickedness of their conduct towards us, or to protect ourselves against future molestation. A father is quite justified in treating coldly for a time a son who has given him offence, so that he may feel his guilt and behave better in future. We are not obliged to treat our enemies as our bosom friends. We need not entertain them or even salute them as a rule, but we are obliged to return their salute. Also sometimes it is our duty not only to salute them, but to show them special signs of benevolence, so as to avoid scandalizing others, and maybe to gain them back, by a little kindness, to the love and friendship of God. We must be careful to forgive our enemies whatever evil they may have done us, having always before our eyes the words of our Divine Lord: "For if you will forgive men their offences, your Heavenly Father will forgive you also your offences. But if you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your offences" (St. Matt. vi. 14, 15). We are never allowed to be revenged upon our enemies. "Revenge not yourselves," says the Apostle, "but give place unto wrath, for it is written: "Revenge is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord" (Rom. xii. 19).

We are, however, permitted to assert our rights,

and to demand reparation for injuries received. It is also lawful to ask God to punish the wicked, to afflict them with some infirmity or another, so that they may be converted, and to pray for the humiliation of the enemies of Holy Church. "Ut inimicos sanctæ ecclesiæ humiliare digneris, te rogamus, audi nos."

It is our bounden duty to assist our neighbour in his wants. If a man be in extreme want, in danger of death, unless we help him, or in danger of being stricken down by some fatal illness, we are obliged in conscience to do what we can for him, giving out of our abundance all that is necessary in order to relieve his wants and deliver him from misery and wretchedness. How can we have the love of God in our hearts if at such a moment we hesitate to save our fellow-man from starvation and death itself? "For he that loveth not his brother whom he seeth, how can he love God Whom he seeth not?" (1 St. John iv. 20). We are obliged to assist our neighbour, not only in cases of great or extreme need of the things that are necessary to life, but even when suffering from the common want of such things. This is manifest from the words in which the Lord will address the wicked at the last day. "Then He shall say to them also that shall be on His left hand: Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you gave Me not to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me not to drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me not

in; naked, and you covered Me not; sick and in prison, and you did not visit Me. Then they also shall answer Him, saying: "Lord, when did we see Thee hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to Thee? Then He shall answer them, saying: Amen I say to you, as long as you did it not to one of these least, neither did you do it to Me" (St. Matt. xxv. 41-45). We are not obliged to give all that we may have saved out of our annual income, but about one fiftieth, or two per cent., as theologians tell us. This duty is especially incumbent upon us when times are bad, when the country is visited by some calamity or other—by war, inundations, pestilence, or famine.

Fraternal correction is another duty that charity imposes upon us. "If thy brother," says the Lord, "shall offend against thee, go and rebuke him, between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou shalt gain thy brother" (St. Matt. xviii. 15).

It is our duty to assist our brother in his spiritual wants. If he has fallen into sin, we must admonish him and make him see the error of his ways. This duty is not only binding upon superiors, but upon all Christians, for we are all obliged to assist our neighbour in his spiritual as well as his temporal wants, and to save him from his mortal enemies, namely, the devil, the world, and the flesh. It therefore follows that children are sometimes obliged to correct their own parents, but in such a case they must act with great prudence, and show that they are animated

with charity alone and filial love. That fraternal correction may be of use, we must be certain that our neighbour has fallen into a grievous sin, and there must be some hope of amendment. This duty is not incumbent upon us when there are present others who are better able to perform it, or when its fulfilment entails upon us great inconvenience, or when the person in whom we are interested has already made amendment. Of course, if we are doubtful whether our remonstrating with him will not do more harm than good, we are not bound to do so.

Scandal is a word, deed, or omission, which, being bad in itself, or apparently so, is the occasion of another's sin. It is direct when we aim at our neighbour's spiritual ruin, or entice him to commit sin. It is indirect when we perform an action that is bad in itself, or apparently so, foreseeing that it will be unto others an occasion of sin. Parents, for instance, are guilty of scandal each time they blaspheme, or use obscene language in presence of their children. "Those," says Cardinal Gousset, "are guilty of scandal who are in the habit of blaspheming, who publish works reflecting upon the Catholic religion, who expose for sale immoral and irreligious books; those who compose and sing obscene songs; those who act plays in which religion and virtue are ridiculed, or those who are present at such performances; artists whose works are indecent; those who expose obscene pictures and nudities; those who work on Sundays, not being justified by necessity, or

any other plausible motive. Women who appear in public *décolletées*, the neck and bosom bare, are sometimes excused on account of the customs and manners of society, which they cannot very well disregard, but they should avoid low-bodied dresses as much as possible, and those who introduce them will have a dreadful account to render before the judgment-seat of God."

By scandal of the weak, we mean the sin of those who are led astray by others. Pharisaical scandal is that which arises from our own malice. To avoid scandalizing others we should not do, at least for a time, works that are indifferent or even good in themselves. We should not, for instance, play the piano on Sundays, when it would scandalize Protestants, who consider such an occupation a breaking of the Lord's day. We should avoid occasionally good works that are unto others an occasion of scandal. A woman who gives offence to her husband by leading a mortified life should abstain from fasting, at least for a time. She might even stay away from church, at least once or twice, in case her going to Mass caused him to curse or to blaspheme. It is also sinful to assist others to commit sin. Formal co-operation takes place each time that we inspire another with an evil disposition, or kindle in his heart a desire to commit sin. This is always forbidden. It is only material when, against our will, we take part in another's sinful action; when our brother makes an abuse of our actions to offend the Almighty

God. This is sometimes permitted, but we must be justified, and the motive we have for acting must be a plausible one, and in proportion to the gravity of the sin, and to the manner in which our action influences the will of another. A tradesman may sell arms, although it may happen that some may buy them for their own destruction. But should he know that an individual came with a bad intention, he could not sell them, unless he were compelled to do so. The same may be said of hotel-keepers, who provide their visitors with meat on Fridays. Were they to refuse to do so, they would drive people away, and entail upon themselves great loss, and, perhaps, certain ruin; and we are not obliged to suffer such a loss, in order to prevent other people from falling into sin. We are never allowed to assist at a Protestant service, to sing in their choirs, to compose music for their churches, or to play their organs, or any other instrument, at their services. Such conduct might seem a denial of the faith and a great occasion of scandal unto others. We must never deny our faith; for if we deny Christ before men, He will deny us before His Father in Heaven.

AMEN.

XLIV.

ON THE ANGELS AND SAINTS OF GOD; ON RELIGIOUS CRUCIFIXES; ON THE IMAGES OF CHRIST AND HIS SAINTS.

"And, behold, a woman, who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind Him and touched the hem of His garment, for she said within herself: If I shall touch only His garment, I shall be whole."—ST. MATT. ix. 20, 21.

WE should, beloved brethren, honour the angels and saints as the faithful friends of God. The honour we pay them redounds to the glory and honour of God Himself. The perfections and prerogatives that we admire in the angels and saints, and for which we honour them, being the gifts of God, it is the Lord Himself that we honour in His saints. We visit a picture-gallery and admire the masterpieces that surround us. Surely our admiration cannot be in the least offensive to the artist before whose works we prostrate ourselves. Nor can the Almighty be offended at the respect and veneration that we have for the angels and saints, considering that it is God Himself manifest in His creatures that we honour and venerate. In the Book of Genesis we read that Abraham worshipped the angels that visited him. "And when he had lifted up his eyes, there appeared to him three men standing near him, and as soon as he saw them,

he ran to meet them from the door of his tent, and adored down to the ground" (Gen. xviii. 2). Lot, also, prostrated himself the moment the angels appeared in his presence. "And the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gate of the city, and seeing them he rose up, and went to meet them, and worshipped prostrate to the ground" (Gen. xix. 1). We should, beloved brethren, address our prayers to the angels and saints, and invoke their protection in all our trials. The love they have for God being most intense, they desire that all creatures should praise His Holy Name. Animated with a heavenly zeal for the salvation of souls, they never cease to take a special interest in our spiritual welfare, and to obtain graces in abundance, on our behalf, from the Almighty. We should, therefore, invoke their protection incessantly, knowing that their influence with God will enable them to obtain for us whatever favours we may stand in need of. If we want a favour from our Queen, and have a friend at Court, do we not apply to him, and ask him to use his influence on our behalf? In a similar manner we should approach the angels and saints of Heaven, and ask them to use, on our behalf, the great influence they possess with the Almighty. This doctrine is also founded on Holy Scripture. Did not the Lord God tell the friends of Job that He would grant their request if His faithful servant interceded for them? The Lord said to Eliphaz the Themanite: "My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends,

because you have not spoken the thing that is right before me, as My servant Job hath. Take unto you, therefore, seven oxen and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer for yourselves a holocaust, and My servant Job shall pray for you, his face I will accept" (Job xlii. 7, 8). If we are benefited by the prayers of the servants of God who are still in the world, how much more beneficial will their prayers be unto us when they have been admitted into the Divine Presence, where they are consumed with the love of God, and zeal for the salvation of our souls? We should also, beloved brethren, honour relics and crucifixes, for they relate to Christ and His saints and are memorials of them. The honour we pay to images and pictures is a relative honour. We honour them because they remind us of Christ and His saints, and, as our Catechism says, are memorials of them. Protestants tell us that our devotion is mere superstition, and most displeasing to Heaven. But did not God Himself order two cherubims to be placed in the Holy of Holies? Did not their wings overspread the mercy-seat of the Most High? "Thou shalt make also two cherubims of beaten gold on the two sides of the oracle; let one cherub be on the one side and the other on the other. Let them cover both sides of the propitiatory, spreading their wings and covering the oracle" (Exod. xxv. 18-20). When Solomon had built a temple in honour of the true God, he carved various images on its walls, and placed two cherubims in the Holy of Holies. "And he made in the oracle

two cherubims of olive-tree of ten cubits in height. One wing of the cherub was five cubits, and the other wing of the cherub was five cubits, that is, in all, ten cubits from the extremity of one wing to the extremity of the other wing. The second cherub was also ten cubits, and the measure and the work was the same in both the cherubims. And he set the cherubims in the midst of the inner temple; and the cherubims stretched forth their wings, and the wing of the one touched one wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall, and the other wings in the midst of the temple touched one another. And all the walls of the temple round about he carved with divers figures and carvings; and he made in them cherubims and palm-trees, and divers representations as it were standing out, and coming forth from the wall" (3 Kings vi. 23-29). It is, therefore, evident that God did not forbid the making of images; what He did forbid was the making of images to be adored and honoured as gods. We do not adore the images of our Lord and of the saints; we honour them, knowing well that the honour we pay them is referred to the originals themselves. "The images of Christ and His saints," says the Council of Trent, "are to be had and retained, especially in churches, and a due honour and veneration is to be given them; not that any divinity or virtue is believed to be in them for which they are to be honoured, or that any prayer is to be made to them, or that any confidence is to be placed in them, as was formerly done by the heathens who

placed their hopes in their idols, but because the honour that is given them is referred to the originals that they represent, so that by the images which we kiss, and before which we uncover our heads, or kneel, we adore Christ, and venerate His saints, whose likeness they represent." The honour we pay the relics of saints can also be justified by passages in Holy Writ. We read in the Acts of the Apostles that the handkerchiefs that touched the body of St. Paul were applied to the infirm and cured them. "There were brought from his body to the sick, handkerchiefs and aprons, and the diseases departed from them" (Acts xix. 12). Also the woman that touched the hem of our Lord's garment was immediately restored to health. It is but natural that we should honour the relics of saints. Were not their bodies the temples of the Holy Ghost, and will they not be one day united to their immortal souls, to those souls that at present surround the throne of God? We honour and respect the memento of a friend, and treasure it up as a most sacred object, and shall we have no feelings of respect and veneration for the bodies of those glorious martyrs who died for Christ? Let us, therefore, beloved brethren, honour the images and relics of the saints. God Himself has given His sanction to this devotion by the innumerable miracles that He has wrought through the instrumentality of these holy relics, and the infallible Church could never tolerate it were it tainted with the least superstition. One extract from Alban Butler on the discovery of the Holy Cross will,

I trust, confirm the doctrine that I have tried to impress upon you. "The pious Empress," says Alban Butler, "ordered the profane buildings that had been erected over the holy sepulchre to be pulled down, the statues to be broken in pieces, and the rubbish to be removed; and, upon digging to a great depth, they discovered the holy sepulchre, and near it three crosses, also the nails which had pierced our Saviour's body, and the title which had been fixed to the Cross. By this discovery they understood that one of the three crosses was that which they were in quest of, and that the other two belonged to the two malefactors between whom our Saviour had been crucified. But, whereas the title was found separate from the Cross, a difficulty remained to distinguish which of the three was that upon which our Saviour consummated His sacrifice for the salvation of the world. In his perplexity, the holy Bishop Macarius, knowing that one of the principal ladies of the city lay extremely ill, suggested to the Empress to cause the three crosses to be carried to the sick person. This being done, St. Macarius prayed that God would have regard to their faith, and, after his prayer, applied the crosses singly to his patient, who was immediately and perfectly cured by the touch of one of the three crosses, the other two having been tried without effect."

AMEN.

XLV.

ON THE VIRTUE OF RELIGION.

"Magnify His Name, and give glory to Him with the voice of your lips, and with the canticles of your mouth, and with harps." —Eccles. xxxix. 20.

Religion has for its object the worship of God and His saints. There are different acts of religion. Adoration is an act of religion by which we prostrate ourselves before God, and acknowledge His supreme dominion over all things. We are obliged to adore God. "The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve" (St. Matt. iv. 10). Being our Creator, He is entitled to receive from us all praise, homage, and adoration. We should adore Him with our whole being. As we are composed of a body and soul, it is our duty to give God homage for both one and the other. Besides, external actions have a great effect upon the soul, and make us love and serve God more fervently. We also honour the angels and saints. We should pay them an inferior honour, for this, as our Catechism tells us, is due to them as the servants and special friends of God. We honour them for their innumerable virtues, and for their fidelity in the service of their Heavenly Master.

It is God that we honour in His saints. It is the divinity manifest in them that we honour, so that the honour we give them refers to God, the Author of their sanctity and greatness. An artist cannot take offence at the admiration we bestow upon a masterpiece, the work of his hands; nor can God be in the least offended at the homage we pay His angels and saints, who are the masterpieces of His infinite wisdom.

We should also give a relative honour to statues and holy images, as they relate to the saints, and are memorials of them. A relic is part of the body of a saint, or something that belonged to him, or touched his body, as the aprons that touched the body of St. Paul, and cured those to whom they were applied. It is but natural that we should honour those bodies that were the habitation of the Holy Ghost, and will rise one day from the dust, to enjoy life everlasting in union with their immortal souls. A mother treasures up a keepsake of a departed child; and is it possible for a Christian not to esteem and venerate the relics and memorials of the saints of God? The honour we give relics and images relates to the saints of whom they are the memorials. As it is God that we honour in His saints, so it is the saints that we honour in their relics and images. We read in Holy Writ that a body having touched the bones of the prophet Eliseus came to life again, and that those who were bitten by the fiery serpent were immemediately cured by looking at the brazen serpent that God had caused to be erected on behalf of His people.

Also, did not the handkerchiefs that had touched the body of St. Paul cure diseases and banish wicked spirits from those who were possessed? We can, therefore, easily understand that the Church is quite justified in approving of this devotion, and that there is nothing in the least superstitious about it; since God Himself has sanctioned it by miracles performed through the instrumentality of relics and holy images. It may be well to quote again the words of the Council of Trent, by which we are exhorted to honour the images of Christ and His saints: "The images of Christ and of His Virgin Mother, and of other saints, are to be had and retained, especially in churches, and a due honour and veneration is to be given them; not that any divinity or virtue is believed to be in them for which they are to be honoured, or that any prayer is to be made to them, or that any confidence is to be placed in them, as was formerly done by the heathen, who placed their hopes in idols, but because the honour which is given them is referred to the originals which they represent; so that by the images which we kiss, and before which we uncover our heads, or kneel, we adore Christ and venerate His saints, whose likeness they represent." The same Council exhorts us to give honour to the relics of saints, in the following words: "The sacred bodies of the martyrs and other saints who are living with Christ, which were the living members of Christ and temples of the Holy Ghost, and are to be raised by Him to eternal life and glorified, are to be held in

veneration by the faithful; by them many benefits are bestowed by God on men" (Sess. 25).

Having spoken on another occasion of prayer and other acts by which we honour God, it may be advisable at present to say a few words on certain sins that are opposed to the virtue of religion. These are heresy, which consists in rejecting an Article of Faith which Holy Church proposes to our belief, apostacy, impiety, idolatry, and other acts of superstition. Idolatry consists in worshipping the creature instead of the Creator. It is a great sin, and is opposed to the virtue of religion. When our Lord appeared, idolatry prevailed throughout the whole world. All nations, the Jews alone excepted, worshipped false gods. Altars were erected and sacrifices offered up in honour of great men, of individuals who had immortalised themselves by the most atrocious deeds. Certain heathens imagined that all creatures, having emanated from the Divinity, were entitled to supreme homage. The sun, moon, and stars, the elements of nature, man himself, all created things, were deemed worthy of adoration. Even those philosophers who acknowledged the existence of a Supreme Being adored as gods the beings that He had created. The picture that St. Augustine gives us of the manner in which the heathens worshipped their gods is so shocking that the very thought of such infamies fills us with horror and disgust. The Saint does not describe the sacrifices and ceremonies of a barbarous people, but those

of the Romans themselves, of the most civilized of nations, of the conquerors of the world. In the Book of Wisdom idolatry is ascribed to the vanity and inordinate affections of men. "For a father being afflicted with bitter grief made to himself the image of his son who was quickly taken away: and him who then had died as a man he began now to worship as a god, and appointed him rites and sacrifices among his servants" (Wisdom xiv. 15).

The empire that the works of art have on the minds of men is considered by Solomon as a prolific cause of idolatry: "If an artist, a carpenter," says the wise man, "hath cut down a tree proper for his use in the wood, and skilfully taken off all the bark thereof, and with his art diligently formeth a vessel profitable for the common uses of life, and useth the chips of his work to dress his meat, and, taking what was left thereof, which is good for nothing, being a crooked piece of wood, and full of knots, carveth it diligently when he hath nothing else to do, and by the skill of his art fashioneth it, and maketh it like the image of a man, or the resemblance of some beast, laying it over with vermilion and painting it red, and covering every spot that is in it; and maketh a convenient dwelling-place for it, and setting it in a wall and fastening it with iron; providing for it lest it should fall, knowing that it is unable to help itself —for it is an image, and hath need of help—and then maketh prayer to it, inquiring concerning his substance and his children, or his marriage; and he is

not ashamed to speak to that which hath not life; and for health he maketh supplication to the weak, and for life prayeth to that which is dead, and for help calleth upon that which is unprofitable, and for a good journey he petitioneth him that cannot walk, and for getting and for working, and for the event of all things, he asketh him that is unable to do anything" (Wisdom xiii. 11, etc.). "But," continues Solomon, "all men are vain in whom there is not the knowledge of God, and who by these good things that are seen could not understand Him that is, neither by attending to the works have acknowledged who was the workman; but have imagined either the fire, or the wind, or the swift air, or the circle of the stars, or the great water, or the sun and moon, to be the gods that rule the world. With whose beauty, if they, being delighted, took them to be gods: let them know how much the Lord of them is more beautiful than they; for the first Author of beauty made all those things. Or if they admired their power and their effects, let them understand by them that He that made them is mightier than they; for by the greatness of the beauty, and of the creature, the Creator of them may be seen, so as to be known thereby. . . . But unhappy are they, and their hope is among the dead, who have called gods the works of the hands of men, gold and silver, the inventions of art, and the resemblance of beasts, or an unprofitable stone, the work of an ancient hand" (Wisdom xiii. 1-10).

Superstition, beloved brethren, consists in rendering to a creature the worship that is due to God alone, or in worshipping God in an unbecoming manner. "Superstitio," says St. Thomas, "exhibet cultum vel cui non debet, vel eo modo quo non debet." There are three kinds of superstition—divinations, vain observances, and magic. We are guilty of the first kind when in order to know the future, or secret things, we have recourse to means that have no connection with the end we have in view. These are the principal kinds of divination: necromancy, which consists in consulting the dead in order to know the future; pyromancy and hydromancy are the consulting of fire and water for the same purpose; chiromancy is the art of foretelling the events of life by inspecting the palm of the hand. The Romans used to consult the flight of birds in order to know whether the gods would be favourable or not. The observation of dreams is also forbidden by the First Commandment; and as God does not, as a rule, communicate His Will to us by means of dreams, and as there is no connection between them and certain future events that depend totally on the free will of man, we are not in the least justified in directing our conduct by such foolish fancies. Should we be so infatuated as to be guided by them, we either become the sport of our feeble imagination, or fall under the delusion of the devil. In the old law, God spoke sometimes by means of dreams, but the occasions were quite exceptional, and in matters of great moment.

Vain observance consists in trying to produce an effect by means that have no proportion with the end we have in view. As God does not use such means, if anything happens it must be the work of the evil one, in whose protection we trust, at least implicitly. We are guilty of this kind of superstition when we imagine that we are safe against diseases if we carry about us a certain article that we deem possessed of the virtue of rendering us proof against all dangers. This superstition is called magic if the effect aimed at is something extraordinary: and malifice if we try to injure others, or excite in them carnal love or sensual desires. Superstition is a mortal sin when we make a compact with the devil, or invoke expressly his assistance. If we have only recourse to the devil implicitly, the sin is venial, and ignorance and simplicity may excuse us altogether. Saul was guilty of superstition when he consulted the witch of Endor. Being threatened by the Philistines, he disguised himself and visited the witch, who was known to have a familiar spirit. The king asked her to raise up Samuel, so that he might know whether the Lord had ordained that he should perish by the hands of his enemies. After some difficulty, the witch granted his request, and the spirit of Samuel appeared. Having reproved the king for disturbing his rest, he told him that God had departed from him, that his kingdom would be destroyed, and his name blotted out from the face of the earth. Although Saul sinned in consulting the witch of Endor, the Lord spoke never-

theless, by the mouth of Samuel, and predicted the fall of the house of the king of Israel and the extinction of his race. "For the Lord will rend thy kingdom out of thy hand, and will give it to thy neighbour David; and the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hands of the Philistines, and to-morrow thou and thy sons shall be with me: and the Lord will also deliver the army of Israel into the hands of the Philistines" (1 Kings xxviii. 17-19).

AMEN.

XLVI.

ON THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

"Blessed be the Name of the Lord, from henceforth now and for ever: from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Name of the Lord is worthy of praise."—Ps. cxii. 2, 3.

By the Second Commandment we are commanded, as our Catechism tells us, to speak with reverence of God and to keep our lawful oaths and vows. We should always speak of God in the most respectful manner possible, and pronounce His Holy Name with profound reverence and veneration, never uttering a single word that could in the least offend His Infinite Majesty. We should also avoid all false, rash, unjust, and unnecessary oaths, as also blaspheming, cursing, and profane words. Blasphemy is a word uttered in contempt of God. We blaspheme when we deny the Divine attributes, the perfections of God, His justice His holiness, saying that God is unjust, or that He turns a deaf ear to our prayers and supplications; or when we attribute to creatures the Divine attributes, the perfections that belong to God alone. We also blaspheme when we speak disrespectfully of holy things, of the saints of God, as the injury done them is referred to God Himself. Blasphemy being a

great sin, all Christians should be most careful to avoid uttering one single word that could redound to the dishonour of God and His saints. "And he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, dying let him die and all the multitude shall stone him, whether he be a native or a stranger. He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, dying let him die" (Leviticus xxiv. 16).

The Second Commandment forbids all false, rash, unjust, and unnecessary oaths. An oath consists in calling God to witness the truth of what we say. It is lawful to take an oath when God's honour, or our own or our neighbour's good requires it. By such an oath we honour God, confessing, as we do, that He is truth itself, that His all-seeing eye penetrates everything, and that He is the avenger of those who speak falsely. "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and shalt serve Him only, and thou shalt swear by His name" (Deut. vi. 13). A false oath consists in calling God to witness a lie, or a promise that we do not mean to keep. Such an oath is a grievous sin; for it is most injurious to God to suppose that He does not know the truth, or knowing it, cares not for it, or may be even induced to sanction a lie. Those who swear rashly, who are continually swearing without being in the least justified in doing so, are guilty of sin, and may sin mortally by exposing themselves to the danger of committing perjury. An unjust oath is generally a very grievous sin, it being most injurious to God to call Him as a witness on

behalf of the sin that we are about to commit, and to invoke His aid in order to confirm us in the evil dispositions with which we are animated. We are obliged to keep a promise testified by an oath. If we swear to do a thing without meaning it, we are guilty of perjury, which is always an enormous sin. We are not, however, obliged to keep an unjust oath: we sin by taking such an oath and sin by keeping it. The oath, for instance, that Herod made in favour of Herodias' daughter was a sinful one, and the king sinned more grievously by keeping it. If you swear to injure your enemy, you commit a sin by taking such an oath, and you are not in the least bound to keep it. Children, not being able to understand its importance, are not allowed to take an oath. Perjurers are also excluded, for no reliance can be put upon what they say, even when affirmed by oath. Also men of great dignity, if we may believe St. Thomas are dispensed from taking an oath, their word being considered sufficient to satisfy us that they speak the truth. "Hoc autem," says St. Thomas, "derogat dignitati personae, ut dubitetur de veritate eorum quae dicit; et ideo personis magnae dignitatis non convenit jurare." It being derogatory to the dignity of a man to question the veracity of what he says, it is not becoming for persons of great eminence to take an oath. Perhaps it is on this principle that Members of Parliament are dispensed from it at the present day. Peers of Parliament in a trial in the House of Lords, say "on my honour" instead of "on my oath."

We can also swear by those creatures in which the Divine perfections manifest themselves in a special manner. "And he that sweareth by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by Him that sitteth thereon" (St. Matt. xxiii. 22).

By the Second Commandment we are also commanded to keep our vows. A vow is a promise made to God of a greater good. This promise differs from a resolution that we take, inasmuch as it is binding, and imposes upon us the obligation of keeping it under penalty of sin. A vow should be made to God, being an act of religion and of a thing more agreeable to Him than the contrary. A vow to do trivial things, or to act against the Evangelical Counsels, would not be pleasing to God, and consequently of no effect. A vow must be made with full deliberation; and one made without knowledge what we are doing, or from unjust fear, would not bind us. If, however, fear proceeds from a just and natural cause, we are obliged to keep the vow made under such circumstances. We are certainly obliged to keep our vows. "When thou hast made a vow to the Lord thy God, thou shalt not delay to pay it; for the Lord thy God will require it, and if thou delay it shall be imputed to thee for a sin. If thou wilt not promise, thou shalt be without sin. But that which is once gone out of thy lips thou shalt observe and shalt do as thou hast promised to the Lord thy God, and hast spoken with thy own will and with thy own mouth" (Deut. xxiii. 21-23). We are obliged to keep the contracts that we have entered

into with man, and why should we be dispensed from fulfilling a solemn promise made to God? If, for instance, we make a vow to build a church, or to give a certain sum of money to the poor, we are bound before God to keep it, and to fulfil our promise as soon as possible. We are obliged to fulfil our promise under pain of sin, and if the matter of our vow be of great importance, we are bound under pain of grievous sin; if trivial, the violation of the vow would be only venial. A vow is absolute or conditional —absolute where there are no conditions attached: for example, I bind myself, by vow, to give one hundred pounds to the poor; conditional when I promise to give this sum provided that I am restored to health. Personal and real: personal if I bind myself to fast every Wednesday in the year; real if I promise to give a certain sum of money to the Church, to our Holy Father, or to the poor. Solemn and simple: solemn when made in a religious order, approved of by the Holy See; simple when made in the world, or without the usual formalities prescribed for a solemn vow. A vow is not binding if something happens that renders it impossible for us to keep it, or if anything takes place that would have prevented us from making it. You make a vow to assist a poor man, he becomes rich, your vow ceases to be binding. Or, again, you make a vow to build a church, meantime you are ruined, you are dispensed from keeping your vow. Certain vows may be rendered null and void, or dispensed with by the Holy Father. A vow

is an act of religion which is most agreeable to God. God approved of the vow Jacob made when the Lord appeared unto him at Bethel in the mysterious vision of the ladder. He also approved of the vow of Anna, who promised to consecrate her child to the Divine service, in case the Lord favoured her with one. "And she made a vow, saying: O Lord of hosts, if Thou wilt look down on the affliction of Thy servant and wilt be mindful of me, and not forget Thy handmaid and wilt give to Thy servant a man child, I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head. And Anna conceived and bore a son and called his name Samuel" (1 Kings i. 11, 20).

Cursing is also forbidden by this Commandment. It consists in wishing evil unto others. It is a grievous sin, and frequently condemned in Holy Writ: "And He loved cursing, and it shall come upon him; and he would not have blessing, and it shall be far from him; and he put on cursing like a garment, and it went in like water into his entrails, and like oil in his bones" (Ps. cviii. 18).

Besides, we are obliged to love one another, and he that curses his brother wishes evil unto him. To wish one evil is to hate him. "Whosoever hateth his brother," says the Apostle, "is a murderer, and you know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in himself" (1 St. John iii. 15). Can we conceive anything more abominable than to curse those souls that have been redeemed by the precious blood of

Christ? Although curses fall back, as a rule, upon those who utter them, they sometimes bring evil upon those against whom they are uttered. This takes place frequently when parents curse their children, or when poor people, orphans, and widows curse those who persecute them. Curses uttered against ourselves take effect very often indeed. We should therefore, beloved brethren, avoid cursing and swearing, and using continually the language of the damned. Should we have contracted this bad habit, we should make every effort to overcome it. "Let no evil speech proceed from your mouth, but that which is good, to the edification of faith; that it may administer grace to the hearers and grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. iv. 29, 30).

AMEN.

XLVII.

ON THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

"But on the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; thou shalt do no work on it—thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy beast, nor the stranger that is within thy gates—for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore, the Lord blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it."—EXOD. xx. 10, 11.

IN these words of Exodus the Lord God imposed upon His chosen people the obligation of keeping the Sabbath, commanding them to abstain from servile work on that day, because, having created all things in six days, the Lord rested on the seventh, and blessed it. In order to commemorate the resurrection of our Lord and other mysteries of our holy religion, the Church substituted the Sunday for the Sabbath. Besides the Sabbath, several other feasts were established among the Jews. There was the Feast of the Passover, which was instituted to commemorate their deliverance from Egypt; the Feast of the First Fruits, that of Pentecost; the Feast of the Trumpets, the day of atonement; and the Feast of the Tabernacles. Some of these feasts lasted seven days, and there was a holy convocation on the

first and on the seventh day. All were obliged to abstain from servile work, and to offer sacrifices in honour of the living God. During the Feast of Tabernacles the people dwelt in tents, in order that all generations should know that for forty years the chosen seed had lived in booths in the wilderness, and should manifest their gratitude to God for the great favours bestowed upon their forefathers whilst they wandered therein. In like manner Holy Church has established feasts to commemorate the mysteries of our holy religion, and to thank God for the signal graces received through the instrumentality of Christ and His saints.

How, beloved brethren, are we to keep the Sunday and other holy days of obligation? We are commanded, says our Catechism, to keep the Sunday holy by hearing Mass and resting from servile work. We should devote the whole Sunday to the service of God. Being free to work six days of the week, it is but natural that we should rest and serve God on the seventh. God, having created the world and all things therein in six days, rested on the seventh and blessed it. We should not content ourselves with hearing a low Mass, and pass the rest of the day in idleness and sensuality. The Sunday should be a day of prayer and devotion. We should begin the day by hearing Mass, and listening attentively to the Word of God. We should set aside part of the day for spiritual reading, meditation, and spiritual and corporal works of mercy. We should pass the Lord's

Day in works of charity and mercy, visiting the sick, instructing the ignorant, comforting the afflicted, and pouring down upon the forsaken and forlorn the balm of heavenly consolation. We consecrate this day especially by assisting at Holy Mass, and offering it in union with Christ and His sacred minister. If we absent ourselves during a considerable portion of the Mass, we do not fulfil the precept. Those who arrive after the Offertory—for, according to theologians of great eminence, it is enough if we arrive before this part of the Mass—or after the Gospel, according to the majority, do not fulfil this precept, and should assist at another Mass, or, at least, remain at the part of the following Mass that has been omitted at the first, being always obliged to be present at the Elevation and Communion of the same Mass. To fulfil this precept, we should be present, not only during the greater part of the Mass, but especially at the Elevation and Holy Communion; and a Christian who absented himself from either one or other of these parts of the Holy Sacrifice would not perform his duty. All those who hear Mass should be present in church—or, at least, form part of the congregation—and follow the priest whilst the Holy Sacrifice is being offered up.

People are excused from coming to Mass for several reasons. Those who are obliged to guard the house, to attend the sick, to watch at the bedside of the dying, are excused from going to Mass on Sundays. A soldier on duty, a traveller in foreign parts where

there are no churches, a woman whose absence from home will cause her husband to blaspheme—these are not bound to fulfil this commandment of the Church. You can also be dispensed from going to Mass, being compelled by necessity to work, or prevented by bad health, or being a considerable distance from church.

We keep the Sunday holy not only by hearing Mass, but also by resting from servile works. By servile works, we mean that in which the body has a greater share than the mind, and which is commonly performed by servants and labourers; ploughing and digging the land, reaping and gathering in the harvest, doing the work of a tradesman or a mechanic—all are servile works, and specially forbidden by the Third Commandment. Fairs and markets, all courts of justice, the examination of witnesses, public contracts, the carrying of burdens, are all prohibited, being incompatible with the homage and worship that we should render to God on the Sabbath Day.

The Third Commandment does not, however, forbid our studying, or doing mental work in which the mind has a greater share than the body. One may write and copy books, draw and paint, teach others, without breaking this precept. We can also play a musical instrument, but should be most careful not to scandalize those who may have more rigid notions than ourselves of the manner of keeping the Lord's Day. We should also remember that we are sometimes justified in working on the Sabbath. We may

be compelled to work, in order to protect ourselves against the danger of suffering a great loss which we should incur were we to abstain from working on the Lord's Day. A farmer, for instance, may work in order to cut his corn, threatened by bad weather, or to protect himself against a sudden and destructive inundation. A poor man is justified in working in order to provide food for his little ones. A servant who is ordered by his master to work on the Sabbath may do so if it be inconvenient for him to leave at once, but he should avail himself of the first opportunity to get another situation. Household work is also permitted on Sundays. We are also sometimes dispensed from this law for grave reasons, or authorised by custom to break it, and should be guided in this matter by the lawful usages of the country in which we live. It is also lawful for us to do works of charity and piety on the Lord's Day. But, in case we are obliged to work, we should be most careful to hear Mass, and to devote as much time as possible to the service of God. Let us do this, let us keep the Sabbath, and God will reward us for our fidelity to His Divine precept. I remember years ago hearing a very holy and learned Belgian priest say that England was indebted for her wonderful prosperity to the manner in which she kept the Lord's Day. The favours that God bestows upon people who are faithful to this heavenly law He confers upon all men who obey Him and keep His commandment: "Blessed is the man," said the Lord, "that doth this, and the son of

man that shall lay hold on this, that keepeth the Sabbath from profaning it, that keepeth his hands from doing any evil, everyone that keepeth the Sabbath from profaning it, and that holdeth fast My covenant. I will bring them unto My holy mount, and will make them joyful in My house of prayer: their holocausts and their victims shall please Me upon My altar; for My house shall be called the house of prayer for all nations" (Isaias lvi. 2, 6, 7).

AMEN.

XLVIII.

ON THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

"Honour thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be long-lived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give thee."—Exod. xx. 12.

By the Fourth Commandment we are commanded to love, reverence, and obey our parents in all that is not sin. Children are obliged by the law of God to love their parents, and to assist them in their wants, both spiritual and temporal. It is but natural that they should be grateful for the innumerable favours they have received from their parents. They are, under God, indebted to them for their very being, and for everything that they possess. God wishes that children should love, reverence, and obey their parents, promising in His Divine book a great reward to dutiful children, and threatening with His anger all those who slight their parents, or speak disrespectfully of them. "He that honoureth his mother is as one that layeth up a treasure. He that honoureth his father shall have joy in his own children, and in the day of his prayer he shall be heard. He that honoureth his father shall enjoy a long life" (Ecclus.

iii. 5-7). Children are obliged to provide for their parents in their wants, and to assist them in their old age. They should pray for them, and in sickness take great care that they receive the Last Sacraments and the consolations of our holy religion. A child should obey his parents in all that is not sin, performing their will and executing their orders cheerfully, and without giving the smallest sign of discontent. He should be most respectful towards the authors of his life, and never utter one single word reflecting upon them, or speak of their defects unto others, making known their weaknesses, and publishing their failings and imperfections. Children should esteem their parents, and give everyone to understand that they are animated towards them with the most profound feelings of respect and veneration. A youth who should speak disrespectfully of his father or mother would commit a grievous sin, and deservedly merit the contempt of all honourable men. However, in this age of ours undutiful children are most numerous, and to be found everywhere. Some give their parents back answers, laugh at their defects, and turn them into ridicule and contempt. Others are so bold as to raise their hands against the authors of their being. They curse and strike their parents, and, using the most fearful imprecations, call down upon their heads the Divine vengeance. Such wicked conduct kindles the wrath of Heaven, and God, in His anger, not unfrequently inflicts the most dreadful punishments upon those miserable children. "He

that curseth his father or mother, dying let him die; he that cursed his father and mother, let his blood be upon him" (Lev. xx. 9).

Let us now consider briefly what are the duties of parents towards their children. Parents must provide for their children, instruct and correct them, and give them a good Christian education. Parents should feed and clothe their children according to their condition of life, and do their utmost to provide for their future welfare. A man who should neglect this duty would prove more unnatural than the beasts of the brute creation themselves. However, we occasionally read of parents who are so depraved as to allow their offspring to suffer from want and hunger, and even to die from starvation. True, such monsters are rarely found, and, when discovered, are held up to public scorn, and hunted down like the wild beasts of the forest.

Parents must bring up their children in the fear and love of God. They are bound to teach their children the fundamental truths of our holy religion: that there is one God, Who will reward them for their good works, and punish them for the smallest violation of His heavenly precepts; that in God there are three distinct Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; that God the Son became man and died for us; and that He will come one day to judge the living and the dead. Children should know as soon as possible the Apostles' Creed, the Our Father, the Commandments, and the Sacraments that they are

about to receive. "Command," says the Lord, "your children to observe, and to do, and to fulfil all that is written in this law, for they are not commanded you in vain, but that everyone should live in them" (Deut. xxxii. 46, 47). Parents should speak of holy things with the greatest respect, so as to kindle in the hearts of their little ones love and veneration for God and His saints. Let them understand that God is present everywhere, filling the whole universe with His omnipotence, and that, being of a boundless wisdom, He penetrates their most secret thoughts. Parents should impress upon their children the necessity of loving and serving God, and of being ever ready to die rather than offend Him mortally. The effect that the teaching of a good mother may have on the tender mind of a child is great indeed; and perhaps no example can bring this truth home to us better than that of Queen Blanche, mother of St. Louis, King of France. "It was," says Alban Butler, "to her care and attention in the education of St. Louis that we are indebted, under God, for the great example of his virtues. . . . It was his mother's care to instil into his tender soul the highest esteem and awe for everything that regarded the Divine worship, the strongest sentiments of religion and virtue, and a particular love of holy chastity. She used often to say to him when he was a child: 'I love you, my dear son, with all the tenderness a mother is capable of, but I would infinitely rather see you fall down dead at my feet than that you should ever commit a mortal

sin.' The King frequently said to others that the strong impression which this important lesson made on his mind was never effaced during his whole life, and that no day passed in which it did not recur and excite him vigorously to arm himself afresh against all snares and dangers of surprise."

Parents must be careful to set their children a good example. They must avoid using bad language, cursing, and swearing in presence of their children, or talking about matters that may in the least scandalize them. As children have naturally a high idea of their parents, believing them to be perfect in everything, one single word uttered in their presence reflecting upon Holy Church and her ministers may prove most detrimental to these little ones. Parents should prevent their children from frequenting bad companions — "evil communications corrupt good manners"—and forbid them to go to low music-halls and dangerous places of amusement. Listen to Solomon, the wisest of men, on this subject. "The father waketh for the daughter when no man knoweth, and the care for her taketh away his sleep when she is young, lest she pass away the flower of her age; and when she is married lest she should be hateful; in her virginity lest she should be corrupted; and having a husband lest she should misbehave herself. Keep a sure watch over a shameless daughter, lest at any time she make thee become a laughing-stock to thy enemies, and a by-word in the city, and a reproach among the people, and she make thee ashamed

before all the multitude" (Ecclus. xlii. 9-11). It is the duty of parents to correct their children: they must chastise them and use the rod if necessary. "He that spareth the rod hateth his son, but he that loveth him correcteth him betimes" (Prov. xiii. 24). And again: "Bow down his neck while he is young, and beat his sides while he is a child, lest he grow stubborn and regard thee not, and so be a sorrow of heart to thee" (Ecclus. xxx. 12). The example of Heli should strike terror into the hearts of all men who neglect to correct their children. The high priest, having omitted to punish his sons and suffered them to continue officiating in the temple, notwithstanding their depravity, was rejected by God and doomed to perish. It was in these words that the prophet announced his doom: "And the Lord said to Samuel: Behold, I do a thing in Israel, and whosoever shall hear it both his ears shall tingle. In that day I will raise up against Heli all the things I have spoken concerning his house. I will begin and I will make an end. For I have foretold unto him that I will judge his house for ever for iniquity because he knew that his sons did wickedly and did not chastise them. Therefore have I sworn to the house of Heli that the iniquity of his house shall not be expiated with victims nor offerings for ever" (1 Kings iii. 11-14). Parents should not, however, lose their tempers when they correct their children. On the contrary, they should remain quiet and unruffled, making their little ones understand that the correction they are about to

administer is for their good, being a necessary evil, and a painful duty which they are obliged to perform altogether against their will. Some parents call their children foul names, and strike them unmercifully. This is a great mistake. Such severe punishment should be avoided by all means, for it may have the most disastrous effect and injure the child for life. Bishop Hay gives the following rules to guide parents in the manner of correcting their children: 1. Many mere childish faults are to be overlooked entirely, as we have seen above. 2. In things that are rather mean and base than malicious, it will be often sufficient to shame children out of them. 3. Disobedience to parents ought never to be suffered, even in small matters; but cost what it will, they ought always to be made to obey. Parents must be prudent and cautious in giving their orders; but once given, they must be enforced. 4. If children ingenuously confess their faults and promise amendment, this may be a just reason for moderating the correction as a reward for telling the truth, or even remitting it entirely, if it be the first fault, with a serious admonition not to repeat it; but if they be found to tell lies to excuse and conceal their faults, this ought never to be passed unpunished; for if they find that lies succeed, they will soon form a habit of lying in other matters. 5. If they begin to pick and steal, when discovered oblige them to make restitution with their own hands, and on their knees to ask pardon. 6. Speaking bad words ought also to be severely corrected.

Masters and mistresses are obliged, as our Catechism tells us, to take care of those under their charge, and to enable them to practise their religious duties. They should be most careful to have them instructed in our holy religion, to see that they come to Mass on Sundays, frequent the Sacraments, and perform their religious duties punctually. They should also correct them, but with great gentleness and charity. They should be most careful never to set them a bad example. Masters should also pay them their wages, and treat them on every occasion with the greatest kindness and gratitude. "If thou have a faithful servant, let him be to thee as thy own soul—treat him as a brother" (Ecclus. xxxiii. 31).

That servants may deserve to be treated in this manner, let us consider what are their duties towards their masters, and impress upon them the necessity of fulfilling them conscientiously, doing everything for the greater glory of God, Who will reward them one day for their fidelity and abnegation. Servants must be just towards their masters, and be careful not to appropriate or waste their goods, or allow others to do so. Some servants imagine that, being badly paid, they are entitled to compensate themselves, and justified in disposing of their masters' property. Their conduct is most blamable. Those who are not satisfied should demand higher wages, or leave and do better for themselves elsewhere. Servants should obey their masters in all that is not sin: "Servants be obedient to them that are your

lords according to the flesh, with fear and trembling in the simplicity of your heart as to Christ. Not serving to the eye, as it were pleasing men, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with a good will serving as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatsoever good thing any man shall do, the same shall he receive from the Lord, whether he be bond or free" (Eph. vi. 5-8). Servants must be most respectful towards their masters: they must never speak ill of them, reveal their faults, or the secrets of the family, and thus expose them to hatred or contempt.

Children and others are obliged to love, reverence, and obey their pastors, never forgetting that they take the place of God, and that one day they will be obliged to render an account of each soul entrusted to their care. They should, therefore, have the greatest respect for all ministers of God, and especially for their parish priest, who is answerable before the Almighty for their immortal souls. A Christian who should disobey his pastor, speak ill of him, inspire men with bad feelings towards him, would sin grievously against Heaven, and deserve for such black ingratitude the severest punishment at the hands of God: "He that heareth you, heareth Me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me, and he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me" (St. Luke x. 16). Contempt for the ministers of God is frequently punished even in this life. I myself have seen men who were bold enough to

attack their sacred character struck down in such a manner as to leave no doubt about their punishment being the work of God. Why should we not have the greatest respect possible for our priests and pastors? "They are," says Cardinal Manning, "ambassadors from God, having, therefore, commission to treat and conclude in His name. They have the credentials of a Divine embassy, with express conditions on which to call upon men to reconcile themselves with God, and with a discretion to judge and decide who do and who do not come within the terms of their commission. They are fellow-workers with God in the field of the world and in the vineyard of the Church. They are ploughers and sowers and reapers. The priesthood has the office of breaking up the fallow ground of the nations and of destroying the roots of unbelief that hinder the plough: 'I have made thee as a new thrashing wain, with teeth like a saw; thou shalt thrash the mountains and break them in pieces, and shalt make the hills as chaff; thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away' (Isa. xli. 15, 16). They are sowers who cast the seed of the word upon all lands and beside all waters. They are reapers who go reaping in the midst of a barren and dying world, who shall one day come with joy, bringing their sheaves with them."

AMEN.

XLIX.

ON THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not kill."—Exod. xx. 13.

"The Fifth Commandment forbids all wilful murder, fighting, quarrelling, injurious words, and also scandal and bad example; it forbids anger, and, still more, hatred and revenge" (Catechism).

Murder, beloved brethren, consists in taking another man's life without legitimate authority. It is a great sin, being a usurpation of the rights of God, Who alone is Master and Arbiter of life and death. It is a sin against God, against society, against the murdered man himself, whom it robs of the most precious thing he possessed—life itself—and a sin that crieth to Heaven for vengeance: "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to Me from the earth; now, therefore, cursed shalt thou be upon the earth, which hath opened her mouth and received the blood of thy brother at thy hand" (Gen. iv. 10, 11). Not only is the man who sheds his brother's blood guilty of this atrocious crime, but all those who encourage the murderer, who enable him to execute his criminal design, giving him shelter, or providing him with the means of success.

Also all who, through wilful neglect, cause the death of others are guilty of murder, and obliged to make restitution for the damage done the murdered man and his family. A doctor who, through ignorance or neglect, should allow those entrusted to his care to perish, would be guilty before God, and bound to make restitution. The same may be said of paid nurses who neglect to take care of those under their charge. Those who do things that are dangerous and unlawful, being answerable for the consequences, are guilty of murder in case their imprudence entail the loss of life upon others. A young man, for instance, who, to kill time, began to throw stones in a public road, would be answerable for the lives of those whom he happened to strike and wound mortally, supposing that he foresaw that this was likely to follow. A man's life may, however, be taken away, and criminals be put to death, by legitimate authority. The welfare of society demands that such men should be executed. It is also lawful to kill an unjust aggressor, provided that one does not go beyond the limits of legitimate defence. If we could defend ourselves by any other means—by flight, for instance—we should be obliged to do so. It is not lawful for us to anticipate the attack and to be the first to strike our enemy. We are, however, justified in repelling force by force, and attacking our enemy the moment he attacks us, or is about to do so, having seized his sword, or raised his arm to strike us. If it be sufficient for our defence to

disarm our adversary, or to wound him, we cannot take away his life, and should be guilty in case we went beyond the limits of what was necessary to ward off the danger with which we were threatened. In a case of this kind one may be carried away by the impulse of the moment, and be more or less excusable before God. We are also justified in defending our goods, or property of great value, at the risk of killing the aggressor. Also what we may do in self-defence, we may do in order to protect others.

Duelling is also forbidden by the Fifth Commandment. It is a combat between two individuals who fight with fatal weapons, and on their own authority, the hour and place having been predetermined. It is a great sin, and condemned by all laws, human and Divine. A duellist has no right to expose his own life, or to take away that of another man. He incurs the displeasure of Holy Church, her anathemas and excommunications, and, in case of death, is deprived of Christian burial. No reason can justify the infatuation of those men who, to settle their disputes, have recourse to so barbarous a custom.

Suicide, which consists in taking away one's own life, is also forbidden by this Commandment. Man has no right to take away his own life, and by doing so he usurps the empire that God alone possesses over all beings. This crime, which is generally the effect of cowardice, entails upon the wretch who is guilty of it the most fearful consequences. In the next life his lot will be that of the damned; in this

he is held up to mankind as an object of horror and contempt. Being cut off from the communion and prayers of the faithful, he is deprived of a Christian burial and of the fruits of that holy sacrifice which is usually offered up for the dead. When, however, self-destruction is the effect of madness, this punishment is not inflicted, and men of the present day seem inclined to believe that a great number of suicides are to be attributed to insanity or mental weakness. Those who expose their lives in order to save others are not guilty of suicide. A father may sacrifice himself for the sake of his children; a drowning man may give to another the plank by means of which he trusted to save his life. One may also shorten one's days by study and overwork. A soldier is justified in exposing his life for his country; it must, however, be a just war, and one approved of by the law of God. A war to be just must be necessary in order to repel an invasion, or to defend the rights of our country. It must also have the sanction of the powers that be. In times of war a soldier is not justified in killing women and children, or even those men who have laid down their arms. If it be, however, necessary to take a town, he may be justified in shelling it, notwithstanding the great loss of life his action may entail upon innocent and harmless people. In case a soldier hesitates about the justice or injustice of a war, he is obliged to presume that his superiors have decided according to the dictates of an enlightened conscience, and is bound to obey them. A soldier is not dis-

pensed from living the life of a Christian. He should be most attentive to his Church, frequent the Sacraments, and set a good example to all other men. A celebrated writer, one of the greatest of the present century, maintains that there is something divine in the profession of arms, and that war itself, in which men are mowed down by thousands, is sent by God as a punishment for the sins of men, soldiers being instruments in the hands of His Divine Providence and the executioners of His eternal decrees. Soldiers should take this view of their profession, and, animated with this spirit, lead the lives of Christian heroes. Superior officers are obliged to see that their men perform their religious duties and attend at the services of the Church. They are also obliged to prevent their men from being an occasion of scandal unto civilians or to the inhabitants of the town in which they are stationed. They must look after their men, pay them their stipend, and provide them with food and clothing. According to Cardinal Gousset and St. Alphonsus, soldiers are generally prone to sins of the flesh, to cursing and swearing. They often, if we may believe these writers, compensate themselves, and especially in times of war, by taking what does not belong to them, under the pretext that their pay is not sufficient. They also offend against the laws of God when, being billeted in country towns, they extort money from civilians, or sell their arms or other articles that belong to the Government.

"Abortion," says Bishop Hay, "is a most detest-

able crime; it is a real murder if the child be quick, which, according to some late discoveries, happens much sooner than is commonly imagined. It is a murder of one's own child, and, what is more deplorable, the murder of the soul as well as of the body; for by preventing the child from being baptized it is for ever excluded from the kingdom of Heaven. Hence we see the crime of those who give, or advise women to take or do, anything to procure abortion, and how careful women ought to be to avoid everything that might cause them to miscarry."

A woman can defend her virtue, and even, if necessary, kill her aggressor in self-defence.

We are not authorized to kill a prince who tyrannizes over us; we must only bear patiently our trials, praying for our persecutor until God comes to our deliverance.

Scandal is also forbidden by this Commandment. By scandal we mean a word, deed, or omission, by which we make another fall into sin. It is direct if we do anything with the intention of causing one to commit sin; indirect if, without having this bad intention, we induce a person by word or example to offend God. Parents often scandalize their children by using bad language, by cursing and swearing. Those who entice others to sin by praise, flattery, and alluring words—those who expose for sale obscene pictures and statues, or books in which our holy religion is held up to scorn and contempt, are guilty of scandal and of the destruction of innumerable souls. Scandal is

a great sin, a spiritual murder. It destroys not the body, but a soul redeemed by the blood of Christ; it undoes His work, and robs Him of the fruit of His Passion and Death.

"Woe to the world because of scandals, for it must needs be that scandals come, but nevertheless woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh. And if thy hand or thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; it is better for thee to go into life maimed or lame than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire" (St. Matt. xviii. 7, 8). That is to say, if the friendship of a certain person, who is dearer than life itself, be unto you an occasion of sin, renounce his friendship, for it is better for you to be deprived of it than to suffer the loss of your immortal soul. Scandal of the weak consists in doing something that is not bad in itself, but, having the appearance of evil, causes others to sin. We should by all means avoid being a stumbling-block to our weaker brethren. "It is good," says the Apostle, "not to eat flesh, and not to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother is offended, or scandalized, or made weak" (Rom. xiv. 21). We should pay no attention to the scandal of those brethren who, putting a false construction upon our good actions, are shocked thereat. Envy and hatred being at the bottom of this pharisaical scandal, we should not allow ourselves to be in the least influenced by it, or depart on that account one iota from the path we may have judged prudent to follow. "Let them alone: they are blind and leaders

of the blind, and if the blind lead the blind, both fall into the pit" (St. Matt. xv. 14).

By this commandment anger is also forbidden. By anger we mean the disturbance of the soul, the bad feeling that we have for others, or the intention of being revenged, or of inflicting punishment upon those who have injured us. It may be no sin at all. We see that our Lord was angry with the money-changers and drove them out of the Temple. "Irascimini et nolite peccare"—"Be angry and sin not" (Eph. iv. 26). When, however, carried away by passion, we inflict upon our enemy a punishment altogether out of proportion to the injury received, we offend against justice and charity, and are guilty of a grievous sin. It is the duty of all Christians to overcome this propensity, which, if not mastered, may become the source of the greatest evils, and urge them on to the perpetration of crimes that may never be forgotten.

AMEN.

L.

ON THE SIXTH AND NINTH COMMANDMENTS.

"For this is the will of God, your sanctification, that you should abstain from fornication, that everyone of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; for God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto sanctifition."—1 THESS iv. 3, 4, 7.

THERE is no virtue, beloved brethren, that renders us more pleasing to God and more like the angels of Heaven than the virtue of purity. It enables us to live in our frail bodies as if we had no flesh at all, and were quite free from its appetites and concupiscences. This holy virtue was so dear to the heart of Jesus that He chose a virgin for His mother, and loved with a special tenderness His virgin disciple, St. John the Evangelist. Also, we read in the Apocalypse of St. John that chaste souls have the privilege of accompanying the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. "And I beheld," says St. John, "and, lo, a Lamb stood upon Mount Sion, and with him an hundred and forty-four thousand, having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of great thunder, and the voice which I heard was the voice of harpers harping

on their harps. And they sung as it were a new canticle before the throne, and before the four living creatures and the ancients; and no man could say the canticle but those hundred forty-four thousand who were purchased from the earth. These are they who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were purchased from among men, the first fruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth there was found no lie: for they are without spot before the throne of God" (Apoc. xiv. 1-5).

Lust, beloved brethren, is an inordinate desire of carnal pleasure, and is of its nature a grievous sin. By this sin we pollute our bodies, which are the members of Christ, the temple of God, and the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost. "Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? But if any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy, which you are" (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17).

And again, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, the Apostle exhorts us not to defile our bodies, for they are the members of Christ and the temples of the Holy Ghost. "Know you not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. Or know you not that he who is joined to a harlot is made one body? For they shall be, saith He, two in one flesh. But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit. Fly fornica-

tion. Every sin that a man doth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. Or know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, Who is in you, Whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you are bought with a great price: glorify and bear God in your body" (1 Cor. vi. 15-20).

How often has not the sin of impurity excited the anger of God! To punish the lewdness of the children of Adam God sent the Deluge, and destroyed from the face of the earth the whole human race, Noah and his family alone excepted. "And God, seeing that the wickedness of men was great on the earth, and that all the thought of their heart was bent upon evil at all times, it repented Him that He had made man on the earth, and being touched inwardly with sorrow of heart, He said: I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth: from man, even to beasts, from the creeping thing, even to the fowls of the air; for it repenteth Me that I have made them" (Gen. vi. 5-7). It was also in consequence of this sin that God destroyed the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha. "And the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrha brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And He destroyed these cities and all the country about, all the inhabitants of the cities, and all things that spring from the earth" (Gen. xix. 24, 25). Likewise, in the New Testament, allusion is frequently made to the manner in which God

punishes those who offend against this most holy virtue. "Do not err," says St. Paul; "neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor the effeminate, nor liers with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor railers, nor extortioners, shall possess the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10). They will never see God, and their lot will be in the pit burning with fire and brimstone. "But the fearful and unbelieving," says St. John, "and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, they shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone" (Apoc. xxi. 8). This sin produces hardness of heart, indifference in spiritual things, aversion from God, and final impenitence. It is also the cause of other sins: of injustice, calumny, perjury, and even murder itself. It was this impure sin that hardened the heart of Solomon, of the wisest of men, and made him not only deny his God, but honour and adore the gods of the heathens. "Not," says St. Augustine, "that Solomon judged their idols worthy of adoration, but, being besotted with love, he was afraid to offend those women whom he was so passionately fond of as to idolise them in his heart."

Immodest plays and dances are forbidden by the Sixth Commandment; and it is, says our Catechism, sinful to look at them. St. Alphonsus teaches that it is a grievous sin to assist at plays that are truly obscene, if we do so in order to gratify our passion and carnal desires. Should we assist at such plays

merely to satisfy our curiosity, or for recreation's sake, being careful to resist all carnal pleasure, we do not sin mortally, and may be justified altogether, being compelled to be present by duty, charity, or filial love. However, St. Alphonsus considers such plays most dangerous to young people, who can scarcely attend them without indulging their sensual and carnal appetites and falling into mortal sin. It is also certain, according to this Doctor of the Church, that all actors and actresses who take part in such performances are guilty of grievous sin, and cannot be admitted to the Sacraments as long as they act in plays that are the occasion of sin to innumerable souls. This is also the teaching of St. Thomas, who distinguishes between good and bad plays, maintaining that those who perform in bad ones incur the censure of Holy Church. The same may be said of dances. Dancing is not an evil in itself, as the example of David proves sufficiently well. But voluptuous dances are contrary to holy purity, and to be shunned by all Christians. It was such dances the holy Fathers had in view when they condemned them.

Bad books, immodest pictures and statues are also forbidden by the Sixth Commandment. Being an occasion of scandal unto others, all those who sell them, or expose them for sale, offend God grievously. According to the same writer, kisses, embraces, touches, and looks that take place from carnal pleasure, are grievous sins, not being justified by

the law of God and holy matrimony. However, according to St. Thomas, such things are not, as a rule, sinful—at least, grievously so—due modesty being observed, if they be done in conformity to custom, or for benevolence and friendship's sake.

To live chaste lives we must, beloved brethren, mortify ourselves. We must guard the avenues of the soul, and chiefly our eyes. "I made a covenant with my eyes," says Job, "that I would not so much as think upon a virgin" (Job xxxi. 1). Another saint says St. Alphonsus Rodriguez, compares the sight of a woman to a poisoned arrow, whose every wound reaches the heart; and also to a spark of fire, which lighting upon straw, unless immediately put out, sets it on fire. In like manner, the evil thoughts caused by the sight of a woman bring along with them nothing but fire and confusion unto the soul, unless timely stifled and prevented. We can, therefore, beloved brethren, easily conceive why saints and holy men were so particular in guarding their eyes, some of them having passed their whole lives without looking a woman in the face. St. Alphonsus Rodriguez tells us that the great St. Bernard stood still one day to look upon a woman without reflecting upon the action, but, taking himself in the act, he conceived such indignation against himself that he immediately went and stood up to the neck in a frozen lake, where he remained until he was taken out half dead.

Another means of preserving this virtue is prayer.

We should address our prayers unceasingly to God, and invoke His protection when tempted by impure thoughts. "Watch ye and pray that ye enter not into temptation" (St. Matt. xxvi. 41). We should meditate frequently upon the Divine attributes, the goodness of God, His holiness and justice, and especially on the Passion of Christ. "There is no remedy so powerful," says St. Augustine, "against the heat of concupiscence as the remembrance of our Saviour's Passion. In all my difficulties I never found anything so efficacious as the wounds of Christ. In them I sleep secure; from them I derive new life." We should also meditate on the four last things—Death, Judgment, Hell, and Heaven. How we shall regret one day having consented to those carnal pleasures! With what confusion shall we not be overwhelmed at the thought of our filthy pleasures being made known to the whole universe! We can also descend in thought into hell, and consider the intense sufferings of the damned—of those unfortunate souls who have been doomed to everlasting perdition for having gratified the lusts of the flesh, the fleeting pleasure of a moment. We should also pray to our Blessed Lady and the saints. Mary, if we may believe St. Bernard, being the channel through which all favours are communicated to us, if we invoke her protection when tempted, she will obtain from her Divine Son on our behalf the graces that will enable us to overcome all temptations of the flesh. "If there be," says this great advocate of our Blessed Lady, "in

the whole world, O sacred Virgin! one that can say you failed to succour him after he called upon you in necessity, let him speak not of your mercy." "Now," says St. Alphonsus Rodriguez, "if application to the Blessed Virgin be very profitable in all troubles and temptations in general, it must truly be much more in whatever relates to the virtue of chastity in particular. For she, being herself most pure and immaculate, and a virgin by pre-eminence, is particularly inclined to show her care of those who call upon her in order to maintain their purity." We should also frequent the Sacraments, and especially the Holy Eucharist. "For," says St. Alphonsus, "it deadens the fuel of sin, checks the motion of concupiscence, and extinguishes the ardours of sensuality, as water extinguishes fire. To overcome these temptations it is necessary for us to mortify the flesh, and to subdue its unruly appetites by fastings and vigils." St. Alphonsus Rodriguez declares that these temptations have their source either in the body or in the soul. In the first case they are generally caused by good living, so that to overcome them we must lead a more mortified life, and be temperate in eating and drinking. "Sometimes, also, they proceed from the soul," says the Saint, "by means of the devil, and communicate themselves to the body. And this may be known by several marks. First, when we are assailed more by impure thoughts and images than by revolts of the flesh, or when we never have these revolts but subsequent to such

thoughts which sometimes are very lively in the most mortified bodies. Besides, when these ideas occur at a time that we have not the least wish for them, and in a place where there is no cause for them, when they respect neither the time of prayer nor the sanctity of the place we are in, all this shows clearly that what passes within us does not proceed from ourselves, but that it is the effect of the persecution of the devil. We must on this occasion make use of remedies different from the former, and, according to all holy men, one of the best is some laudable occupation which, vigorously engaging the mind, effaces every filthy image that has been impressed thereon." Another remedy against those temptations is the fear of God. "I have found by experience," says St. Bernard, "that there is nothing more proper to obtain the grace of God, to preserve it when obtained, or to recover it when lost, than never to think or presume too much of ourselves, but always to walk before God in holy fear." We should be always on our guard having continually before our eyes the sad example of some of the greatest saints, who, through want of holy fear, fell away from their God. "I tremble," says St. Augustine, "when I think of so many great men whom we have seen and heard of, who, after their virtues had placed them among the stars and almost fixed their habitation there, have miserably fallen into the most grievous sins and died impenitent. We have seen, Lord, the great lights of Thy Church fall from Heaven, being pulled from thence by the

infernal dragon; and, on the contrary, some that lay grovelling upon the ground, wonderfully elevated all at once by the power of Thy Almighty Hand." "You are not," says St. Jerome, "more holy than David, wiser than Solomon, or stronger than Samson." We should, therefore, beloved brethren, work out our salvation in fear and trembling, lest, abandoned by God for having presumed upon ourselves, we should become the sport of our unruly passions. "Qui stat, videat ne cadat." St. Alphonsus Rodriguez tells us that two Jesuit priests, being at the court of Spain, lived such angelic lives that everyone was astonished, and the King himself was persuaded to ask them what enabled them to emulate, by the purity of their lives, the angels of Heaven. Their secret, they answered, their great secret, was the fear of God. Also, beloved brethren, we should be most careful not to suffer anyone to take the least liberty with us that may cause us to offend against this holy virtue. "Chastity is so delicate," says St. Alphonsus, "that the least thing wounds it, and, therefore, we should be extremely cautious not to expose it to the least danger." "This," continues the saint, "is a rich treasure that we carry in earthen vessels, and, if these are once broken, all is lost; therefore, we ought to be more attentive and vigilant in blocking up every passage by which impurity may find a way to our souls."

We should also confess all sins against this holy virtue, and every temptation, whether we yielded or not; at least, spiritual writers advise us to do so.

We often do not know whether we consented or not, and, being doubtful, it is prudent for us to make a full confession of the whole matter to the minister of God. Besides, the confession of these temptations will humble us, draw down upon our heads the Divine grace, and be the best means of confounding the implacable enemy of our immortal souls. Cardinal Gousset tells us that with regard to these temptations three things are to be considered: (1) the evil suggestion, the bad thought; (2) the pleasure produced by the suggestion of the evil one; and (3) consent. "If the will," says Father Schouppe, "advertently and deliberately takes pleasure in the impression felt, there is mortal sin; but if the will only gives an imperfect advertence or a half-consent, there is venial sin; if the will does not consent at all there is no sin." Carnal pleasure being always a mortal sin, we sin grievously, although we have not the least intention of acting upon the suggestion of the devil, each time that we indulge in these unlawful motions of the flesh, if there be full deliberation and consent on our part. Let me impress upon you, beloved brethren, in conclusion, the necessity of living holy lives. Be most careful to avoid all occasions of sin, and to stifle from the very beginning all irregular motions of the flesh, never forgetting the words of the Apostle who tells you that your bodies are the members of Christ and temples of the Holy Ghost. Remember that these frail bodies of yours will one day rise from the dust and put on immortality. As

chastity is a heavenly gift, you must ask it of God. Never cease raising your hands towards Heaven, and imploring the protection of the Lord, and that of His Divine Son. Address, also, your prayers to the saints of Heaven. Having been tempted as you are, they know your wants, your weaknesses, and will come, if implored, to assist you in your struggles with the devil, the world, and the flesh. Invoke also the protection of the Mother of God. A heartfelt prayer addressed to the Virgin Mother may obtain for you graces in such abundance as to secure for you a glorious victory over your immortal enemies.

O Virgin Mother, ever meek,
In our behalf to Jesus speak;
That from our hearts all sin effaced,
We may through you be mild and chaste.

AMEN.

LI.

ON THE SEVENTH AND TENTH COMMANDMENTS.

"And that no man overreach nor circumvent his brother in business, because the Lord is the avenger of all these things, as we have told you before, and have testified."—1 THESS. iv. 6.

TO-DAY I propose explaining the Seventh and Tenth Commandments. The one forbids all unjust taking away or retaining what belongs to another; the other, all unjust desire of our neighbour's goods and profits. Justice, beloved brethren, is a moral virtue that induces us to give to each one his due. It is divided into commutative, legal, and distributive justice. By commutative is meant that justice that renders to everyone what belongs to him, "quod suum est." It regulates the contracts between man and man. Legal justice has reference to our duties towards the State. It imposes upon us the obligation of discharging all duties that our social position entails upon us. Distributive justice regulates the dealings of the State with all members of society. It is this justice that obliges the powers that be to confer favours upon men according to their deserts, and to see that taxes and burdens are imposed in proportion to the means of all citizens. Justice commutative consists in

giving to everyone his due, in respecting the right of another man. This right is divided into real and personal. Real right, "jus in re," entitles a man to do with a thing what he pleases, to claim it as his own wherever it may be. He must, however, be careful in using his right not to break the laws of the land. Personal right is that which entitles us to claim a thing that we do not as yet possess. In the first case we are proprietors, in the second claimants. The owner is, as a rule, free to dispose of his property as he pleases, provided he acts in a manner conformable to the laws of the country. "Dominium est jus utendi et abutendi re sua, quatenus juris ratio potitur." The rights of property are sacred, and no one can be compelled to renounce them unless for public reasons, and then he is entitled to compensation. Communism is opposed to the rights of property. It declares that all things are common to all, no private rights whatsoever being admitted. "La propriété," says Proudhon, "est un vol." "Property is theft." This baneful system has been condemned by the Holy See. It is opposed to the laws of God, to the welfare of society, to nature itself. Do away with property, and you put an end to the greatest stimulant that man can have to raise himself. Ownership in property existed among all nations from the very beginning, from the very dawn of creation; and the Bible is full of laws to protect the rights of individuals and to inflict punishment upon all those who should violate them. "Non

furaberis" are words that are written in golden letters in every page of Holy Writ. We can, therefore, understand why our Holy Father, Pius IX., should have condemned the system of Proudhon as infamous, being opposed to all laws, human and Divine.

The rights of property may be acquired in divers ways. By simple seizure we acquire a right to certain things that belong to no one—to wild birds, for instance. Those who go out shooting on another man's estate break the law, if they do so without leave, but are justified in keeping the birds they may have shot, the owner* being only entitled to compensation for all damage done. This does not, however, apply to birds that are so tame as not to be able to escape from the landlord's premises. Those who find, accidentally, a treasure† are entitled to half, the other half going to the owner of the land in which it was found. When a man finds a thing, he should make every effort to discover the owner, and if it be impossible to find him, the thing may be sold, and the value given to the poor, or kept by him who found it.

We can also acquire by right of accession. Accord-

* Lege autem municipali sylvestria, excitata et occisa in alicujus agro ad dominum pertinent, quæ in conscientia obligat post sententiam judicis, et etiam ante sententiam erit injustum resistere domino volenti talia capere (Stephen apud Slater).

† Lege nostra thesaurus pertinet at coronam quæ lex est pœnalis: ac proinde in foro conscientiæ ante sententiam judicis inventor rem sibi occupare notest (O'Dea, n. 683, apud Slater).

ing to law, the ownership of a thing gives a right to everything it produces, or that is united to it naturally or artificially. A landlord who has erected, with stolen material, a building or house upon his property, can claim it, the man whose material he used being indemnified. Should a tenant who is in good faith put up a construction on another man's property, the owner can claim it, being, however, obliged to meet the expenses incurred in erecting it, or pay the tenant a sum equivalent to the improvement made thereby to his property. Should the tenant have acted in bad faith, the landlord can order the building to be levelled to the ground at the tenant's expense; or, if he prefer to claim it, he is only bound to meet the expenses incurred in erecting it.

When two things belonging to two distinct owners are so united as to be inseparable and form one article, it belongs to him who owns the material that is most important, the other being indemnified. When the workmanship is of great value, the thing belongs certainly to the artificer or artist, provided that he be willing to pay the value of the material. If a thing be made of materials belonging to different owners, let the parts be separated, and each individual have his own; if this be impossible, they can all claim it, and have it sold, each one receiving a share in proportion to the quantity, or quality, of the material that belonged to him. However, the owner of what is most valuable in the article may claim the whole and indemnify the others.

Prescription* is another means of acquiring property, or of freeing ourselves from certain obligations by a certain lapse of time, certain conditions being observed. We can conscientiously avail ourselves of the rights of prescription. The welfare of society demands that an end should be put to that perpetual litigation that would exist were the ownership of property to remain uncertain. To prescribe, a man must be in good faith—he must believe that what he possesses belongs to him. A title is required, not a real one, for with such a one there is no necessity for prescription, but one that, though false, has all the appearance of being genuine. For instance, you buy a stolen horse from a man whom in good faith you believe to be the owner. If you remain in possession of the animal for the space of three years, being all the time in good faith, you may claim it in virtue of prescription, notwithstanding the reclamation of the

* Terminus autem præscriptio apud nos adhibetur stricte tantum de iis quæ vocantur incorporeal hereditaments, *i.e.*, rights and profits annexed to or issuing out of land. The most important are advowsons, tithes, commons, ways, watercourses, lights, offices, dignities, franchises, pensions, annuities, rents. Land or movables cannot be claimed by prescription Attamen Statute of Limitation, 3 and 4 William IV., c. 27. Extinxit jus ad agros, redditus, juspatronatus si eorum dominus sibi ea non vindicaverit intra viginti annos; quod tempus The Real Property Limitation Act, 1874: 37 and 38 Vict., c. 57, contraxit ad duodecim annos (Stephen, iii., p. 504, apud Slater). Hinc jure anglico præscribi possunt practice incorporeal hereditaments, land, rent, advowsons; non autem mobilia (Slater).

lawful owner, who may turn up in the meantime. To prescribe, a certain time is required—namely, thirty years for immovables, there being no title; if there be a title, ten years, the owner being present; twenty, if he be absent. As to movables, three years are required according to the Roman law, if there be a title; thirty without one. In France three years are necessary for stolen and lost articles, possession alone being deemed sufficient for other things. For a right of way,* thirty years are required. Possession is also an essential condition—there is no prescription without it: "Sine possessione non procedit præscriptio"—"It must be public, peaceable, undisturbed, and with the intention of owning the thing prescribed" (*Dominativa*). A son who inherited from his father an estate which was obtained by foul means can avail himself of prescription and retain the property, if he remain in possession thirty years, being in good faith all the time. Debts can also be cancelled by prescription, but as a rule we cannot avail ourselves of this privilege, and we are bound to discharge them if we possibly can.

Theft is forbidden by the seventh commandment. It consists in taking unjustly, or in keeping what belongs to another. If we keep a thing with another's consent, there is no theft. Rapine is a theft with

* Jure anglico, rights of way, watercourses, præscribuntur post vigenti, vel saltem absolute post quadragenta annos (Slater).

violence; fraud is when we have recourse to deception. Theft is, of its nature, a mortal sin: "Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor railers, nor extortioners, shall possess the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. vi. 10). It may, however, be a venial sin, if the sum taken is very trifling—for instance, a few pence. If the sum be considerable, the sin is mortal, and one is bound *sub gravi* to make restitution. But what sum is required for the sin being mortal? Some theologians teach that a labourer's daily pay is sufficient, but others—and their opinion is generally followed—maintain that we must consider the circumstances of those who have been robbed. One or two shillings will be enough if the person be a poor man; three, in case of a mechanic; five, if he be a fairly rich man; seven, if he be very rich; and ten or fifteen will* suffice, no matter how rich may be the defrauded individual. We must also consider whether the thing taken is of great value to the owner or not. For instance, it may be a mortal sin to take from a labouring man the instrument that enables him to earn his daily bread.

One may be guilty of a mortal sin each time one steals, be it only a trifle, if one have the intention of acquiring a considerable sum by means of these small thefts. If we have not this intention, then the sin is venial. Should little thefts piled up together form a

* Summum fere æqualem uni libræ sterlinæ esse gravem materiam consentiunt plerique recentiores theologi (Slater).

considerable sum, the thief is guilty of a mortal sin as soon as he perceives of this accumulation, and is obliged, under the penalty of damnation, to restore at least the last items, that, being added to the total, made it considerable; for no one is entitled to enrich himself at another's expense. I may, however, add that in little thefts a greater sum requires to be taken to constitute a mortal sin than when one steals in a lump—one-half more, or double, as the case may be. If one steals from the same person and at different times, a half, if from different persons and at different times, the double would be required of what would be otherwise necessary for a mortal sin. These little thefts do not, however, coalesce, if a certain interval, say two months, has elapsed between them. Those who use false weights and measures sin each time, for they intend to enrich themselves by cheating others. It is theft to take the fruit of another's garden; and should the branches hang over our premises, we are not justified in lopping them, or taking the fruit, unless it fall on our pathway. We are not justified in cutting another man's timber, but, unless forbidden by law, poor people can take the dead wood and useless brambles. In case of extreme necessity, one is justified in taking what belongs to others—at least, what is sufficient to save his life—without being as a rule bound to make restitution should he get better and acquire the means of doing so. It is only in this extreme case that Holy Church admits the doctrine of communism. It is not an

injustice to take what belongs to us, or to refuse to pay a debt to a man who is indebted to us for the same amount. This is what is called compensation. It must be founded on justice, the debt being certain; and we must take the thing itself if possible, or its equivalent—the debtor being put out of danger of discharging twice the same debt. Again, it is never lawful to have recourse to compensation, when we have other means of obtaining our rights. Husbands and wives must respect each other's property, and children not unfrequently sin by stealing money from their parents. Husbands sin against their wives by using the common fund for their own personal ends, or in favour of children of another marriage, or when they unjustly seize and squander their wives' property, or refuse them what is necessary for their condition in life. Women sin by spending profusely their husbands' money, or by bestowing without their consent a considerable sum upon their parents and friends. They are, however, entitled to provide for their father and mother, and to interest themselves in their relatives and assist them in their wants. Children who rob their parents are also bound to make restitution. Not only do labourers break these commandments by neglecting their masters' work, but masters also who refuse them their wages are guilty of great sin—of one that crieth to Heaven for vengeance. Those are guilty of injustice who sell bad things as sound and perfect, and pass off inferior articles as valuable ones. Tradespeople who have

used false weights and measures should make restitution, by giving better measure to those who frequent their shops; or if they have retired from business after having made a large fortune, as is usually the case, they should give to the poor, or endow some charitable institution. Those also who have obtained a Government situation, a public appointment, judges, magistrates, parish doctors, sin by not discharging conscientiously the duties of their state. The payment of rates and taxes is a public duty that citizens are obliged to fulfil, and those who cheat in these matters are guilty of sin, and obliged to make restitution to the Government, or at least to the poor. "Render," says the Apostle, "therefore, to all men their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour" (Rom. xiii. 7).

A murderer is obliged to compensate the parents, the wife and children of the murdered man, to meet all expenses incurred, and make good the loss his crime may entail upon the descendants and other relatives of his victim. This obligation falls upon the heirs of the murderers, who are obliged to discharge it in proportion to their inheritance. If the man slain be the assailant, there is no necessity to make reparation, provided that one has not gone beyond the limits of legitimate defence. In case a man fell in a duel, his murderer would be free of all obligation.

All those who have injured their neighbours are

obliged to make reparation; all are obliged to restore ill-gotten goods; they sin in taking, and in keeping, what does not belong to them. All must pay their debts. This duty should be performed as soon as possible, and if a person have not the means wherewith to meet his liabilities, he should cut down his expenses as far as it can be done, so as to be able to do so; and meantime he should be animated with the intention of paying his debts, and making reparation for all injury inflicted upon others. Children are obliged to meet their father's liabilities from their inheritance, and make reparation for any wrong he may have done. Restitution must be made as a rule not to the poor or to charitable institutions, but to the owner if he can be found. In case the owner cannot be found, it will be quite sufficient to make it to the poor or to some hospital or house of mercy. A possessor in good faith is bound, as soon as he finds that what he possesses does not belong to him, to restore it to the owner. Should the thing have perished, or have been consumed, he is free from all obligation, provided that he has not enriched himself at the owner's expense. Should a person sell a stolen article, which he had purchased in good faith, he would be obliged to indemnify the buyer, in case the owner claimed it. But in case of the buyer not being *evicted*, the vendor would not be obliged to restore the purchase money to the owner, who could pursue the thief for the possession of the articles stolen. It is supposed that the vendor is honest and in no way the gainer by the

transaction. This doctrine is that of a great number of theologians and quite in conformity with the Roman Law, and can be followed *tuta conscientia*. Some divines even maintain, and among them Cardinal Gousset, that the vendor would not be obliged to indemnify the owner had he received gratuitously the stolen property and sold it. A man, for instance, receives a valuable horse which happens to have been stolen and sells it for a considerable sum. Meantime the owner turns up and claims the money obtained for the horse, the vendor and animal having disappeared. Is the owner entitled to it? Cardinal Gousset says he is not, but most theologians maintain that he is, and their opinion appears more plausible and more in conformity with the dictates of conscience, it not being at all right that a man should enrich himself at his neighbour's expense. When a man in good faith restores what does not belong to him, he is entitled to all expenses incurred with regard to it. A man in good faith can claim the thing for himself, should the owner not be forthcoming, all efforts having been made in vain to find him. According to the law of France a thing bought at a fair or market or from a licensed vendor need not be given up to the owner unless payment be made for it. A possessor in bad faith is obliged to restore the thing itself or its equivalent to its lawful owner, and to make reparation for all injury done. In case the stolen property perish, there being no fault on his part, he is still bound to make restitution, unless it would have

equally perished had it not been stolen. Those who accumulate money by begging, pretending to be poor, are bound to make restitution. It will, however, be sufficient to bestow it upon those who are really in want. If several people combine to steal, they are all answerable for the stolen property and must make restitution *in consolidum*—that is to say, that if all but one fail, he alone is bound to indemnify the owner, being, however, entitled to pursue the other delinquents. If a man doubt whether he is entitled or not to certain property, he is bound, to clear up his doubts, to consult about the matter. In case he cannot get at the truth, he can remain in possession, provided that he began in good faith. Otherwise he would be obliged to make restitution *pro rata dubii*. You are not only bound to make restitution for all injury done, but also for the loss your conduct may have caused your neighbour to suffer. If you destroy, for instance, a musical instrument, and thus deprive a man of earning his living, you are obliged to make good whatever loss your wickedness may have brought upon him. You must not only restore the instrument, but make reparation for time lost and opportunities thrown away through your folly. It may be well to remark that we are only responsible for unjust and sinful actions that are the cause of the injury done. In case, for instance, a thing entrusted to our care perish without any fault on our part, we are not bound to make restitution. Neither are we bound to make restitution for having injured a person in the

performance of our duties, unless we be guilty of a grievous sin through neglect or ignorance. A farmer is answerable for his cattle; and should they, through neglect on his part, cause damage to his neighbour's crops, he is bound to make reparation. He that commands another to do wrong is answerable before God, and must also make reparation for the injury done, provided his orders be not countermanded before being carried into execution. In some cases he is also obliged to indemnify his agent for whatever loss he may have sustained in carrying out his wishes. He that counsels another to do wrong sins against the seventh commandment, and must make restitution to the injured party. A man is also bound to retract as soon as he finds out that he erred and gave mischievous advice. A man who advised another to commit a robbery, showing him a secret passage into his neighbour's house, a lawyer whose advice proves fatal to his client, being due to negligence and culpable ignorance, would commit injustice, and would be obliged to make reparation. We also sin when, by praise and flattery, we encourage another to injure his neighbour, exaggerating his wrongs and thus exciting him to be revenged, or persuading him that a certain wicked action would add lustre to his name and render him for ever renowned. We sin by consent—by voting, for instance, and electing a person altogether incapable and unworthy of representing us in Parliament or elsewhere. Members of a jury who, by an unjust sentence, condemned a man to death,

would sin grievously, and be held bound to make restitution, supposing culpable ignorance and negligence on their part. We sin by concealment when we afford a hiding-place for thieves, and thus enable them to do mischief and execute their wicked plans, when we receive ill-gotten goods, and encourage malefactors in their evil ways. We also sin by being partners in another man's sin, and must make restitution in proportion to what we may have received and to our share in the injury done. We may, however, be excused if, for instance, we took part in a robbery, being threatened with death in case we refused, or, if threatened with death, we gave a man a sword, with which he meant to take another man's life. We sin also by silence, by defending the evil done, or not preventing it. In case we were bound by duty to prevent damage being done to another, our silence would be culpable, and we should be obliged to make reparation. A servant would be answerable for injury done by outsiders to his master's property. Masters, teachers, parents, are responsible for the damage done by those under their care, at least *in foro externo*. Some say that they are not bound in conscience to make reparation unless by their silence they encouraged those under them to do wrong, and thereby rendered themselves guilty of a grievous sin. They should, however, in case the affair went before the court, abide by the decision of the judge. The obligation of making restitution *in solidum* means, as explained above, that all those who have co-operated

in doing wrong are responsible for the whole injury done. One person may, however, be bound before others, who would be only obliged to make restitution, in case of his failing to do so. To know whether we are bound *in solidum* to make restitution, we have only to ask ourselves this question, namely, whether our co-operation was quite sufficient to cause the whole evil done, and if not, whether it was necessary, or whether we conspired or not with others to do wrong. Men combine to break into a house, or set it on fire: they are all responsible, and bound *in solidum* to make reparation. Restitution must be made to the owner, and, if he cannot be found, to the poor—at least, as a rule. Shopkeepers, as I said before, are obliged to make restitution by selling their goods cheaper, or, if they have given up business, by making donations to charitable institutions or assisting the poor. The unlawful possessor is first bound to make restitution, and, if he fail, the other co-operators. As to reparation on account of an injury done, the first to make it must be the man who commanded others, and then those who executed his orders, the others coming after them. In case, however, the first failed, the others would be bound to make reparation. A creditor must first of all discharge his privileged debts, those secured by mortgage, and then the ordinary ones. With regard to these, he may discharge one before the other—at least, if asked to do so, and even, according to some writers, when not asked, provided that he be not in the bankruptcy

court, and have every hope of being able to meet all engagements.* A bankrupt has no right whatsoever to dispose of his property. Restitution may be made privately, or through another, without the injured party having any knowledge of it. A man in bad faith is bound to forward to the owner, at his own expense, the property of which he has possession. He would not, however, be obliged to do so in case the expenses were extremely heavy. Should the thing perish on the way, he would, as a rule, be still bound to make reparation. On the contrary, the man being in good faith, the owner would have to incur all expenses necessary to enable him to enter into possession of his property. St. Alphonsus gives several reasons that dispense from making restitution. You are dispensed, if you cannot make reparation without losing your social position, which you acquired by lawful means. If, however, you were indebted for your position to deception and roguery, you would not

* Lege anglica every conveyance or transfer of property or charge thereon made, every payment made, every obligation incurred, and every judicial proceeding taken or suffered by a person unable to pay his debts as they become due from his own moneys; in favour of any creditor, or of any trustee for such creditor, with a view to giving such creditor a preference over other creditors, shall, if the insolvent become bankrupt within three months afterwards, be deemed fraudulent and void as against the trustee (Stephen).

Lege anglica igitur fit rescissio solutionis integræ factæ sic fraudulenter uni creditori. Quæ dispositio legis utrum in conscientia obliget ante sententiam non videtur esse certum (Slater).

be justified in refusing to make restitution. "You would be also exempt," says St. Alphonsus, "in case you exposed thereby your daughters to the danger of being perverted. You are also excused in conscience for any injury done innocently, without sin on your part. In *foro externo*, you must obey the law courts. You are exempt in extreme necessity, or even when extremely pinched, also should you have compounded with your creditors, or made a present, having lost sight of your debt."

To conclude, beloved brethren, I would exhort you to make reparation for all injury done, and to pay your debts as soon as possible. This duty is incumbent upon all Christians. "To delay payment (without the creditor's consent)," says Bishop Hay, "is to retain the property of another, and to expose the owner to great loss and inconvenience. It often even proves the ruin of tradesmen and merchants, and brings the debtor under the guilt of a great crime before God." I would impress upon you the necessity of stifling in your heart all inordinate desires for riches and earthly goods. Avarice is a most dangerous sin. The avaricious man sets his heart on money, is always busy about the means of acquiring it, and very often does not fail to obtain it by the most foul practices. Not infrequently the loss of unjust gain, of vile lucre, will drive him to despair. Let us, beloved brethren, detach our affections from perishable things, from goods that are subject to decay, and

let us live for things immortal, having these words indelibly impressed upon us: "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?" (St. Matt. xvi. 26).

AMEN.

LII.

ON THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness."—St. Matt. xix. 18.

"The Eighth Commandment forbids all false testimony, rash judgment and lies, calumny and detraction, also tale-bearing, and any word that injures our neighbour's character" (Catechism).

False testimony is a deposition contrary to truth, made upon oath in a court of justice. It is a mortal sin, and imposes upon the perjurer strict obligation to repair the injury done. He is obliged to make good whatever loss his false accusation may have entailed upon the injured party. Lies are also forbidden by this commandment. To tell a lie is to say what we know to be false, with the intention of deceiving others. There is the jocose lie, when we tell a lie in fun; there is the officious lie, when we ward off from ourselves, or from others, something that is irksome or inconvenient; and the malicious lie, *mendacium damnosum*, by which we injure our neighbour. We should never tell a lie, not even to save the whole world. It is a sin that is frequently denounced in Holy Scripture, is opposed to right

reason, and to the welfare of society. If we were free to tell lies, if it were open unto us to deceive others, no one could trust us, all intercourse would be rendered impossible. It is, therefore, easy to understand why the Scripture should have used such strong language in condemning those who have contracted this habit. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, they shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone" (Apoc. xxi. 8). Jocose and officious lies are only venial sins. A jocose lie may be no sin at all, the words being said in jest, and it being quite easy for all present to understand their meaning. A malicious lie that causes our neighbour a grievous harm is a mortal sin, which imposes upon us the obligation of repairing whatever wrong we may have done. There is no lie—at least, no sin—when we speak according to the dictates of conscience, although what we say may not be in conformity with the truth.

Mental reservation is forbidden by the Eighth Commandment. It consists in putting in one's own mind a sense on words differing from their plain and natural meaning. This is divided into two kinds—namely, (1) strictly mental, when those present cannot possibly perceive the sense meant; for instance, you are asked whether you had meat for dinner, and you reply that you had not, meaning that you did not have raw meat; (2) improperly such when the sense can be easily understood from circumstances.

A beggar asks an alms, you tell him you have no money, meaning you have none to give him. It is never lawful to use mental reservation in the strict sense; such a manner is a lying one, and always sinful. It is sometimes lawful to use mental reservation improperly such. A priest being asked whether he knows a thing, may say that he does not, meaning that the knowledge that he may have, not having come from ordinary sources, but having been acquired in the confessional, he cannot make use of it or turn it to account. It is also customary for servants to say that their master is not at home, implying that he is not at home to see people. We cannot, however, use mental reservation, improperly so called, without sufficient reason, and those who are on their oath at a public court, or elsewhere, are obliged to tell the truth without the slightest equivocation.

Rash judgment consists in judging evil of anyone without sufficient cause. It is of its nature a mortal sin, and is frequently condemned in Holy Scripture. "Judge not that you may not be judged, for with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged" (St. Matt. vii. 1, 2). To be a mortal sin, it must be deliberate, founded on trivial motives, and in a matter extremely grave. Should we condemn a dissipated young man whom we found in bad company, we should not be guilty of rash judgment. It must be deliberate and in a matter of moment. Rash judgment is most injurious to our neighbour, who has a right to the esteem of all men—a right that he

values more than life itself. It generally arises from pride. Being puffed up with our own importance, we despise others, imagining them capable of weakness they never dreamt of. "Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam of thy own eye, and then shalt thou see to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (St. Matt. vii. 5).

Doubts and suspicions are forbidden by this commandment. There is doubt when we suspend our judgment on some groundless charge against our neighbour, and suspicion if, without sufficient grounds, we feel inclined to form a bad opinion of him. Doubts and suspicions are forbidden on the same grounds as rash judgments. We are not justified in suspecting our neighbour. He is entitled to our esteem, and we do him an injustice by depriving him of it. We may sin mortally by these doubts and suspicions, especially if there be question of some enormous sin, the very thought of which would be quite enough to cause our fellow-man the greatest pain possible. It is, however, lawful for us to protect ourselves against strangers, and we should not in the least sin were we to have recourse to unusual precautions in order to shield our families against an unknown individual who might happen to put up at our house. Pastors, superiors of every class, and parents are quite right in having a watchful eye upon those under their care, and feeling for them great anxiety, for fear that they should go wrong and become the victims of designing people. "The

doubts and suspicions of priests and other superiors," says Father Schouppe, "are not unjust and blameworthy, for it is their duty to watch over their inferiors, and, to a certain degree, mistrust them, that so they may prevent them from doing wrong."

Detraction is the unjust taking away of our neighbour's good name. It is divided into calumny and backbiting. Calumny consists in attributing to our neighbour sins that he has not committed, or in exaggeration of them; backbiting is a species of detraction that takes place each time that we speak unjustly of our neighbour's hidden faults. All detraction, where the matter is grave, is of its nature a mortal sin—it deprives our neighbour of his good name, of the esteem of men, of a blessing that he values more than all the riches of the world: "A good name is better than great riches, and good favour is above silver and gold" (Proverbs xxii. 1). Detraction may expose a good man to hatred and contempt. His friends cease to esteem him, and, losing all confidence in him, they finish by banishing him from their society altogether. How this must affect him and fill his heart with grief and sorrow! This sin will be the more grievous if the slanderer be a person of importance whose word is questioned by none. Although never allowed to accuse another falsely of sin, we are sometimes justified in revealing the hidden sins of others. We can sometimes do so in self-defence. If we are condemned by the evidence of a perjured witness, we can justify ourselves, and

make clear our innocence at his expense. It is also lawful to make known the secret sins of our neighbour on public grounds, to protect society against grievous harm, and to prevent innocent people from being injured. We can also inform those who are interested parties, and are bound to correct the person whose secret faults are known to us. We can, for instance, tell the parents of a young man that their child is given to gambling, to debauchery, although these defects may be quite unknown to them or their friends. We can also give truthful characters of servants when asked for them, and say things reflecting upon them, where this is necessary. Of course we can speak of public crimes, of the crimes of those men who have been condemned by the tribunals of the country, and of those crimes that, having been committed publicly, have been made known in the locality that we inhabit. But should a man who had compromised himself inhabit a country where his crime was unknown—I refer to an individual who has not been sentenced at a public court—it would be perhaps better not to make any revelation reflecting upon him, unless his weaknesses were such as to render him dangerous to society. It is not lawful to renew old sores, and to allude to the faults of a man who is repentant and determined to repair the past by leading a virtuous life in future.

Detraction may be committed in different ways. The following lines seem to include all kinds of detraction:

"Imponens, augens, manifestans, in mala vertens,
Qui negat aut minuit, reticet laudatve remisse."

Imponens, by attributing to our neighbour a sin that he has not committed, or a defect that he has not; *augens*, by exaggerating his faults; *manifestans*, by publishing without necessity his hidden imperfections; *in mala vertens*, by putting a bad construction on good deeds; *qui negat*, by refusing to acknowledge his good qualities; *aut minuit*, by diminishing the lustre of his good actions; *reticet*, by keeping silent when silence is an approval of the bad things that are being said of anyone; *laudans remisse*, by praising a man in such a manner that all present can easily understand that he is very little deserving of being praised at all. The revelation of a sin of special malice to one person alone, let him be ever so prudent, is deemed by some to be defamatory and worthy of censure. If the sin were known to a great number of people in the town, there would be no detraction in alluding to it; but even then it would not be charitable on our part to take pleasure in listening to a thing of the kind. Those who take pleasure in listening to a slander sin; and if they induce a person to backbite or calumniate his neighbour, they are obliged to repair the evil done, and to make restitution, in case the slanderer himself were unable to do so. Superiors who do not prevent those under them censuring and defaming others are guilty of sin, and are sometimes bound to make restitution on behalf of their protégés.

We should never encourage detraction, but should, if it be prudent to do so, silence the slanderer and defend the injured party. We should at least show, by our bearing, that we take no pleasure whatsoever in hearing our neighbour slandered. As a rule, private persons are not obliged to put to silence the detractor. It may be much better to drop the conversation, to allude to some other matters, or leave his company altogether. The detractor must make reparation for all wrong done to the injured party. He must restore his good name, and repair whatever loss he may have suffered in his business from false and unkind reports spread about him. The calumniator must confess that he lied and aspersed without reason his neighbour's good character. The person, who revealed without sufficient reason the hidden faults of another, cannot say that he told a lie, but is, however, bound to repair the injury done by all possible means, confessing publicly that he said very foolish things, and acted more foolishly still, and showing upon all occasions great respect to the man he wronged. It is most difficult to make reparation for the evil done: a bad report spreads like wildfire. In vain do we say that we erred; people will not believe us, and meantime our neighbour has lost his reputation for ever, doomed to live a wretched life, friendless and forlorn, an object of execration to the best of men. The great remedy against detraction is charity. If we love our neighbour, we shall never utter a single word reflecting upon his character, or

suffer anyone to befoul his fair name. On the contrary, we shall always speak well of him, so that all may believe, as a saint remarks, that he is a special favourite of ours. "Six things there are which the Lord hateth, and the seventh His soul detesteth: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that deviseth wicked plots, feet that are swift to run into mischief, a deceitful witness that uttereth lies, and him that soweth discord among brethren" (Proverbs vi. 16-19). "The tale-bearer shall defile his own soul, and shall be hated by all; and he that shall abide with him shall be hateful, the silent and wise man shall be honoured" (Ecclesiasticus xxi. 31).

AMEN.

LIII.

ON THE SACRAMENTS.

"I, therefore, a prisoner in the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation in which you are called."—EPH. iv. 1.

THE Sacraments, beloved brethren, being the channels through which God communicates that heavenly grace that will alone enable us to follow the advice of the Apostle, and to walk worthy of the vocation in which we are called, I may be excused for saying a few words about these sacred rites. A Sacrament is an outward sign of inward grace instituted by Christ for the sanctification of our souls. By sign, we mean a sensible thing by means of which we acquire the knowledge of something unknown. Thus, smoke is a sign of fire; the footprints we see on the ground tell us that someone has passed by. The words we use in speaking are signs that enable us to communicate our ideas to others. The Sacraments are outward signs that produce the grace they signify. In the Sacraments there are two distinct elements—the one visible, the other invisible, as in man there are two distinct natures—a corporal and a spiritual one. The matter of the Sacrament is the thing used, to-

gether with its application to the person who receives the Sacrament; and the form, the words that are used when the application takes place—"Accedit verbum ad elementum, et fit sacramentum." In Baptism, the matter is the water, together with the ablution we make in administering it, and the words we use are the form. As the Sacraments receive their efficacy from Christ, we must always use the matter and form that He ordained. When, according to the common estimation of men, the matter ceases to be what Christ instituted, or, when the words have no longer the substantial meaning of the form that He appointed to be used, there is no Sacrament. In Baptism, for instance, if we were to use wine instead of water, or omitted the name of one of the Divine Persons, the Sacrament would be invalid. There must be a moral union between the matter and form, as it is the nature of the one to determine that of the other. In Baptism, for instance, the water must be poured out and the words pronounced at the same time; and should there elapse a certain time between the one and the other, the words would have no meaning and no efficacy, and there would be no Sacrament. The want of faith or morals on the part of the minister does not invalidate the Sacraments, provided that he administers them according to the manner that Christ ordained, and with the intention of doing what the Church does. This doctrine was maintained by St. Augustine against the Donatists, and it is also the doctrine of the Church of Rome.

"It matters not," says St. Gregory, "whether the seal be of gold or of iron; provided that it leaves impressed upon the public deeds the king's effigy, that is enough." Should the minister not mean to do what the Holy Church does, and what Christ ordained, the Sacrament would be null. If the priest, for instance, poured water on the child, being only actuated with the intention of showing others how to baptize, it would be no Sacrament. Again, the Sacraments may be invalid for want of disposition in the recipient. He who is not baptized cannot be confirmed or receive any other Sacrament. A Sacrament may be received validly and not licitly. A Christian who is confirmed in a state of mortal sin, for which, although conscious, he has no sorrow, receives the Sacrament without its sacramental graces, and is guilty of sacrilege. We receive the Sacraments validly and licitly when, besides the necessary conditions for the valid reception of the Sacrament, we have those that will entitle us to its fruits and graces. Though certain dispositions are required on our part when we receive the Sacraments, the graces we receive are not due to our dispositions, however perfect they may be, but to the Sacraments. This doctrine is brought home to us by a very simple example. Unless perfectly dry, wood will not burn. However, the dryness of the wood is only a condition, fire being the element that consumes it. So with the Sacraments. They apply the merits of Christ to those who are well disposed and fit to be con-

sumed by the fire of Divine love that never ceases to irradiate from these sources of grace. Of course, God could have bestowed upon us His Divine gifts without the Sacraments, but it was fitting that man should be sanctified by means of visible elements. We are composed of a body and soul, of a corporal and spiritual element that are so united that one cannot act independently of the other. It is by visible things that we reach the invisible. "Cujus proprium est," says St. Thomas, "ut per corporalia et sensibilia ad spiritualia et intelligibilia deducatur" (p. III., q. 61, Art. 1). To conform Himself to our nature, Jesus chose certain rites and ceremonies as the means of applying to our souls His graces and merits. These ceremonies, which produce the grace they signify, have no efficacy in themselves, and receive all their virtue from God's Will, which selected them as the instrument of His power. It is also by the Sacraments that we are united into one body. "For in one spirit were we all baptized," says the Apostle, "into one body" (1 Cor. xii. 13).

There are seven Sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, the Holy Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Orders, and Matrimony. It is an Article of Faith that there are seven Sacraments. This doctrine, which is founded on Scripture, Holy Church has always maintained. There is not one Sacrament of which mention is not made in Holy Writ and in the works of the Fathers of the primitive ages. If this doctrine be human, by whom has it been invented, and in what

country? It would have been impossible to have imposed it upon men without their protesting, and there are no traces of such a protest to be found in the history of the Church. When Luther denied the necessity of some Sacraments, the whole Catholic world protested. Had some man a few years before this invented them, and passed them for genuine without the slightest opposition on the part of clergy or laity? The thing is not only impossible, but would reflect upon the veracity of Christ, Who promised to be with His Church until the end of time. That this doctrine is that of the Apostles is manifest from the teaching of the Oriental Church on the matter. She also maintains that there are seven Sacraments, and that this doctrine is contained in the deposit of faith. Otherwise she would have been only too happy to accuse the Church of Rome of having prevaricated and tampered with the Word of God. Why Christ instituted seven Sacraments is thus explained by the Catechism of the Council of Trent: "There is," says the Catechism, "a certain analogy between the natural and spiritual life. In the natural order man must be born in order to become a member of society, grow, and receive nourishment. When ill, he wants medicine; when old, assistance. A human society cannot exist without magistrates, and is perpetuated by successive generations. Likewise in the spiritual life, by Baptism we become members of the Church, of this spiritual society of which Christ is the Head. Confirmation gives us spiritual growth and the

strength of manhood. The Holy Eucharist is our daily bread: 'My Flesh is meat indeed,' says Our Divine Lord, 'and My Blood is drink indeed' (St. John vi. 56). Disabled, the Sacrament of Penance invigorates us, and Extreme Unction comforts us in our old age, healing our wounds and destroying the remains of sin. Order provides us with those who administer the Sacraments and direct us in our path heavenwards. And Matrimony sanctifies the contract of marriage, so that children are legitimately engendered unto God and this spiritual society perpetuated."

Baptism and Penance are called the Sacraments of the dead, because they confer the first grace, and thus raise us from the death of sin to the life of grace. They also increase the grace of God in those who possess it already. The five other Sacraments are called Sacraments of the living, for they presuppose sanctifying grace in those who receive them. Sometimes these Sacraments produce the first grace—when one, for instance, receives them with a contrite heart in a state of sin of which one is unconscious. The Sacraments confer also sacramental graces, by which we mean graces proper to the end for which each Sacrament has been ordained. For instance, when confirmed we not only receive sanctifying grace that is adapted to the nature of the Sacrament, but also actual graces, and a right to all such graces that will enable us to fight valiantly the battles of Christ. Three Sacraments, namely, Baptism, Confirmation,

and Holy Order, confer a character on those who receive them. By character, we mean something spiritual that is indelibly impressed upon the souls of those who receive one of these Sacraments, separating them from all others, and rendering them fit to receive other Sacraments, and apt to perform certain spiritual duties. The character of the priesthood, for instance, "raises those who receive it above the ordinary faithful, as leaders are raised above the common soldier, as shepherds above a flock; it bestows upon them a resemblance to Jesus Christ, the great High Priest or Pontiff by nature; associates them with His sacerdotal dignity and with all the power that was given to Him in heaven and on earth" (Schouppe). The ceremonies make us understand the excellence of the Sacraments, and dispose us to receive them with greater devotion. Having been instituted by Holy Church, they cannot give grace *ex opere operato* from their own intrinsic virtue, and are only efficacious inasmuch as they excite our fervour, and thus enable us to derive greater benefit from the Sacraments, from these fountains of divine grace. The sacramentals are also sacred things instituted by the Church for our spiritual welfare. They excite in us good dispositions, which move God to have mercy upon us and grant us His favours. Besides, when we use them we appropriate to ourselves the merits of Christ and His saints, the treasures of the Church, so that they are a great help in the spiritual work that we have in hand.

Let us, beloved brethren, ask God to animate us with great esteem for the Sacraments and ceremonies of the Church. Let us approach frequently these fountains of divine grace, so that at our last moments our fervour and devotion may be unto each one of us a source of heavenly consolation.

AMEN.

LIV.

ON BAPTISM.

"Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." —St. Matt. xxviii. 19.

Baptism, says our Catechism, is a Sacrament that cleanses us from original sin, makes us children of God and members of the Church. It forgives also actual sins, with all punishment due to them, when it is received with proper dispositions by those who have been guilty of actual sin. Baptism remits, beloved brethren, not only original and actual sin, but all punishment due to sin. In this Sacrament the merits of Christ are so abundantly applied to our souls, that the whole temporal punishment due to our sins is forgiven, so that if we died immediately after being baptized we should be admitted forthwith into the Divine Presence. It is on this account that the priest does not impose a penance upon those who receive this Sacrament. On the contrary, in the Sacrament of Penance he is bound to impose one, the merits of Christ not being applied as a rule in that Sacrament in the same superabundant manner. It is but just that ungrateful children who fall after

being pardoned should be treated with greater rigour. The penalties of sin remain after baptism. Having become by baptism members of that mystical body of which Christ is the Head—for by baptism we have been incorporated with Christ—it is but natural that we should still suffer the penalties of sin. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection" (Rom vi. 5). Besides, the concupiscence that remains after baptism not only reminds us of our fall and humbles us, but will, if we overcome it, entitle us to a great reward in the world to come. Baptism not only cleanses us from sin, but adorns the soul with sanctifying grace and supernatural virtues. "Man, when justified," says the Council of Trent, "receives through Jesus Christ, in Whom he is incorporated, together with all infused virtues, faith, hope, and charity; for if hope and charity be not united with faith, it does not unite him perfectly to Christ, and he does not become thereby a living member of His body." Holy Church teaches that in baptism we not merely, as Protestants maintain, appropriate to ourselves the merits of Christ, but that we are in reality through the divine merits cleansed of sin, purified, appearing before God beautiful and lovable, being full of virtue, of the spirit of God, and celestial gifts. "If anyone," says the Council of Trent, "maintains that the grace of Jesus Christ which is conferred in baptism does not remit sin, and that all that had the nature of sin is

not totally blotted out, but that sin is only remitted inasmuch as it is not imputed, let him be anathema. For God hates nothing in those who have been regenerated, there being nothing worthy of damnation in those who have been buried with Christ by baptism unto sin, who do not walk according to the flesh, but, putting off the old man and putting on the new, who has been created according to the heart of God, have become innocent, pure, unpolluted, lovable in the sight of God; so that there remains nothing in them that can prevent their being admitted at once into heaven." The doctrine of the Church is in conformity with that of the Apostle. "For we ourselves," says the great Apostle of the Gentles, "also were sometime unwise, incredulous, erring, slaves to divers desires and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared, not by the works of justice which we have done, but, according to His mercy, He saved us by the laver of regeneration and renovation of the Holy Ghost, Whom He hath poured forth upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that being justified by His grace, we may be heirs according to hope of life everlasting" (Tit. iii. 3-7). In this passage the Apostle attributes our justification to the merits of Christ, applied to our souls by the laver of regeneration, by baptism, and to the operation of the Holy Ghost, Who is poured forth upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Lord. In his Epistle to the

Romans he inculcates the same doctrine: "Know you not that all who are baptized in Christ Jesus are baptized in His death. For we are buried together with Him by baptism into death; that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, to the end that we may serve sin no longer" (Rom. vi. 3-6).

In this Sacrament we also receive a character which is a spiritual mark indelibly impressed upon our souls either for our glory or confusion, separating us from all others, and conferring upon us the rights of children of God and His Church. "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. iv. 30). That this Sacrament is necessary for salvation is proved from Scripture and the constant teaching of the Church. "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (St. John iii. 3). It is, therefore, evident that we cannot be saved unless we be born again—that is to say, regenerated by water and the Holy Ghost. "If anyone," says the Council of Trent, "shall maintain that baptism is not necessary for salvation, let him be anathema." This law applies to children as well as adults, so that parents should be most careful to have their little ones baptized as soon as possible.

Should they be so unfortunate as to die without the Sacraments, they must ever be deprived of Heaven and the happiness of the elect. Holy Church does not, however, teach that such souls are tortured in the flames of hell, though this was the opinion of St. Augustine and other Fathers, but that, dying in a state of enmity with God, they are for ever excluded from His Divine Presence. Many theologians maintain with St. Thomas that these little ones not only do not suffer, but enjoy a certain happiness.

Baptism may, however, be supplied by martyrdom and perfect contrition, together with the desire of receiving the Sacrament. For instance, the Holy Innocents that were put to death under Herod were all saved, having been baptized in their own blood. A heathen who desired to embrace our holy religion, being full of zeal and charity, would also be saved, should he die without having an opportunity of receiving the Sacrament. "In case," says St. Thomas, "a man lived according to his lights, faithfully fulfilling the duties the natural law imposed upon him, rather than allow him to perish, God would send an angel from Heaven to enlighten him on the great truths of eternity." This Sacrament was instituted when our Lord was baptized, but only became obligatory after His resurrection. We read in St. Matthew the following account of our Lord's baptism: "And Jesus, being baptized, forthwith came out of the water, and lo! the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God

descending as a dove, and coming upon Him; and behold, a Voice from Heaven saying: This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased" (St. Matt. iii. 16). "The same favour," says a spiritual writer, "which Jesus Christ, as man, merited by the deep humility of His baptism—in which He mixed with penitents as one of themselves—has been granted gratuitously in our baptism. As soon as the holy water was poured upon our head, the heavens, which before had been closed to us by original sin, were opened, and the Holy Ghost descended upon us, and a Voice from heaven said, 'This is now My beloved child.'"

The matter of the Sacrament is water. It is immaterial, so far as the validity of the Sacrament is concerned, what kind of water is used: let it be from the sea, a river, or a well, provided that it be pure and uncorrupted. The ablution, or application of the water to the subject, is called the proximate matter. The form consists of the words used when the Sacrament is administered, namely, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The Sacrament may be administered by immersion, infusion, or aspersion. Each manner is sufficient for the validity of the Sacrament; but in these countries the Roman ritual must be followed, and the Sacrament administered by infusion—that is, by pouring water on the child's head, and pronouncing at the same time these words: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of

the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," the water being poured and the words pronounced at the same time and by the same person. A triple immersion or infusion takes place in order to represent the death of Christ, Who remained three days in the grave; but one would be quite sufficient for the validity of the Sacrament. This Sacrament cannot be renewed, impressing as it does upon the soul a character that can never be effaced.

Bishops and priests are the ordinary ministers of this Sacrament, and a deacon may be commissioned to administer it publicly. This Sacrament being, however, necessary for salvation, in case of necessity, may be administered by a lay person—a man or woman. A woman should not, however, baptize in presence of a man, unless she were better instructed and more fit to administer the Sacrament. Also, a Catholic should be preferred to a heretic or a heathen. Although one may be validly baptized by heretics, if they administer the Sacrament according to the rites of Holy Church and as Christ ordained, nevertheless, as they do not always baptize with water and in the name of the Blessed Trinity, having very lax ideas about the nature and necessity of the Sacraments, converts from such sects should be, before being received, baptized conditionally.

For the reception of this Sacrament no dispositions are required on the part of children, who are not capable of any; but adults, to receive it validly, must have the intention of receiving the Sacrament, and

must be animated with Divine faith and true contrition for their sins in order to receive its sacramental graces.

I will conclude, beloved brethren, with a few words on the ceremonies of baptism. The child about to be baptized is presented to the priest at the church door: not being as yet of the number of the faithful, he is deemed unworthy of entering the church. The priest breathes upon him, to indicate that he is about to receive in baptism a new life, through the operation of the Holy Ghost. He makes the sign of the Cross on the child's forehead and breast, to signify that he should never be ashamed of the Cross of Christ, but love it and at least bear it patiently. The salt that the priest puts into the child's mouth denotes that he ought to preserve his soul from the corruption of sin by the salt of heavenly wisdom. Then the priest commands the devil to depart, and to make room for the Holy Ghost, Whom the child is about to receive. The priest touches the ears and nostrils of the child with a little saliva, saying "Ephpheta, be thou opened into an odour of sweetness." This ceremony means that, as Christ cured the deaf and dumb with a little spittle, so shall the ears of the child's soul be opened through the divine grace to the word of God, and he shall become the sweet odour of Christ. The child having promised to renounce the devil and all his works and pomps, the priest anoints him with holy oil on the breast and shoulders, to indicate that the divine grace represented by the

oil will strengthen him and render easy the yoke of Christ. Then, after having made a profession of faith, he receives the sacramental rite. This profession of faith should be made by his sponsors, who should be good and enlightened Catholics, and determined to see that their god-child, in case his parents neglect their duty, is brought up in the Catholic Church, and remains faithful to the solemn promise made on his behalf at the baptismal font. After baptism, the priest anoints the child's head, to show the dignity to which he has been raised. The white cloth with which the child is clothed is emblematic of his innocence. Finally, the priest puts a lighted candle in the child's hand, as an emblem of the faith that he has received, and to show that he must never be ashamed to profess it before men, saying at the same time these words: "Receive this burning light, and keep thy baptism without blame; keep the commandments of God, that when the Lord shall come to His nuptials thou mayest meet Him together with the saints in His heavenly court, and mayest have life eternal, and live for ever and ever."

AMEN.

LV.

ON CONFIRMATION.

"Who, when they were come, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost, then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost."—Acts viii. 15, 17.

After Stephen's death the followers of Christ suffered persecution and were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. The progress of Christianity, and the miracles which the Apostles daily performed, so exasperated the proud Pharisees that they determined to root out our holy religion and extinguish it in the blood of those who professed themselves Christians. Driven from Jerusalem, where the followers of Christ were suffering the most violent persecutions, Philip visited Samaria. The illustrious deacon announced to the inhabitants of that country the Word of God, telling them that Jesus, Whom the Jews had crucified, was the Son of God, and that the Father had raised Him from the dead. The Samaritans listened to Philip and were converted, having witnessed the great miracles He performed. "For many of them who had unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, went out, and many taken with the palsy and that were lame, were healed" (Acts viii.

7, 8). The Apostles having heard that the inhabitants of Samaria had received the Word of God, sent unto them Peter and John, "who, when they were come, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost, then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (Acts viii. 15, 17).

The graces, beloved brethren, which were conferred upon the people of Samaria on that occasion, may be received by all those upon whom the ministers of God impose their hands in the Sacrament of Confirmation. Confirmation is a Sacrament by which we receive the Holy Ghost, in order to make us strong and perfect Christians and soldiers of Jesus Christ. In this Sacrament we receive the fulness of the Holy Ghost, and become perfect Christians. The grace of baptism leaves us feeble children who require to be strengthened by special graces, in order to fight the battles of Christ. The example of the Apostles themselves will suffice to impress upon us the efficacy of this Sacrament. Before receiving the Holy Ghost they were weak and ignorant men, upon whom the teaching and example of our Divine Lord Himself seemed to have produced very little impression. Scarcely was Jesus seized by His enemies when all His disciples abandoned Him, Peter, the head of the Apostles, denying Him thrice at the voice of a servant. When our Divine Lord alluded to His sufferings and resurrection, no one could understand Him. His predictions were mysteries that His ignorant and stupid followers could not penetrate. In a few days

after the ascension of our Divine Lord these same men receive the Holy Ghost and are totally altered. From being timid followers of Jesus, they became the boldest champions of our holy religion—champions whom death itself could not intimidate. Suddenly Peter preaches, and three thousand men are converted. Entering the temple, he meets a man lame from his very birth and restores him to health. "Silver and gold," says the Apostle, "I have none, but what I have I give thee; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth arise and walk. And taking him by the right hand, he lifted him up, and forthwith his feet and soles received strength. And he, leaping up, stood and walked, and went in with them into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God" (Acts iii. 6-8). Of those who witnessed this great miracle, five thousand were converted. When threatened with prison for having preached Jesus of Nazareth and announced His resurrection from the dead, the Apostles replied that they should obey God rather than men, and that they could not but publish the things they had seen and heard. The Divine Spirit had so transformed them that they were ready to shed their blood for that Jesus Whom they lately forsook when in the hands of His mortal enemies. We, also, receive wonderful graces in the Sacrament of Confirmation. True, the gifts of prophecy, and of miracles, are not usually granted in our days, for they are not needed, but the graces that will enable us to overcome our mortal enemies, and support us in our

daily struggles, are received in this Sacrament. We receive also the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost: the gifts of wisdom, of understanding, of counsel, of knowledge, of fortitude, of fear, and of piety. The gift of wisdom makes us prefer our God and salvation to all earthly things; the gift of understanding enables us to penetrate the mysteries of our holy religion; by the gift of counsel we conform ourselves in our daily actions to the will of God; the gift of knowledge reveals to us the ways of God in His dealings with men, and brings home to us all that the sufferings we endure in this world for the sake of God will have their reward, and that the wicked, who seem at present to triumph, will be punished for their iniquities. The gift of fortitude enables us to suffer for Christ, to fight His battles, and even to shed our blood in His sacred cause; piety kindles in us a holy affection for God and His ministers; fear is the beginning of our salvation. "With fear and trembling," says the Apostle, "work out your salvation" (Phil. ii. 12). Chrism, which is the matter of this Sacrament, is more or less figurative of these effects. Oil fortifies the body; the grace of the Sacrament of Confirmation makes us strong and perfect Christians. The balsam, being sweet, reminds those who have been confirmed that, having received abundant graces, they must become, in the words of the Apostle, "an odour of sweetness, pleasing to God" (Phil. iv. 18). Oil is also used as light, and reminds us of the light that we receive in this Sacrament. According to the

common opinion of theologians, a Christian receives the Sacrament the moment the Bishop makes the sign of the cross with the chrism on his forehead, pronouncing at the same time these words: "I sign thee with the sign of the cross; I confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." However, all persons who are about to be confirmed should be present from the beginning of the service, and especially when the Bishop imposes his hands upon them, and prays for those present that they may receive the Holy Ghost. The sign of the cross is made upon the forehead to indicate that we must never be ashamed of the Cross of Christ. The little blow the Bishop gives on the cheek of each one, is to tell him that he must be ever ready to suffer everything for his Divine Master. This Sacrament impresses upon all who receive it validly a character that is indelibly imprinted upon their immortal souls, by means of which they are distinguished from all others as soldiers of Jesus Christ. Several conditions are required on the part of those who receive this Sacrament. They must have been baptized, and be in a state of grace—Confirmation being a Sacrament of the living. They must also know the principal truths of our holy religion, and be instructed in everything that relates to this Sacrament. It will be, therefore, the duty of those who are about to receive this Sacrament to attend the instructions that may be given on the matter, and to obtain in the tribunal of

penance the forgiveness of their sins. All Christians should receive Confirmation, Christ having instituted it as a means by which they are enabled to overcome the innumerable temptations to which they are exposed. In times of persecution a Christian who should neglect to receive Confirmation would incur great responsibility in the eyes of God. In the first ages of the Church infants were often confirmed, which custom still prevails in the East. In the Western Church, however, children who have arrived at the use of reason are alone confirmed, and for two reasons. It seems more becoming to confer this Sacrament upon us at a time when we require its sacramental graces. Besides, children who have attained the use of reason can understand the nature of the Sacrament, which will bestow on all its graces in proportion as they are disposed. A Bishop is the ordinary minister of this Sacrament, but a priest may be delegated by the Supreme Pontiff to administer it. In the Greek Church it is usually administered by simple priests—a custom which Rome has sanctioned. It is the general opinion that this Sacrament was instituted by our Lord after His Resurrection. Some theologians, however, maintain that the Apostles were authorized by their heavenly Master to define the matter and form of the Sacrament of Confirmation, an opinion that can scarcely be held at the present day, the Council of Trent having declared that all the Sacraments had been instituted by Jesus Christ Himself. To conclude, beloved brethren, I would impress

upon you the necessity of receiving this Sacrament. You must never forget it is your duty to receive it if you have the opportunity. As in Baptism you received spiritual life, and were made children of God and heirs of eternal life, so in Confirmation you will be comforted, and rendered fit to fight for that priceless inheritance which Christ our dear Lord purchased for you by the shedding of His most precious blood.

AMEN.

LVI.

ON THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

"And whilst they were at supper Jesus took bread, and blessed and broke, and gave to His disciples, and said, Take ye and eat, this is My Body. And taking the Chalice, He gave thanks and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of this, for this is My blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins."—St. Matt. xxvi. 26-28.

It was the night before He suffered, beloved brethren, that our Lord instituted the Blessed Sacrament. Having, in accordance with the Jewish dispensation, partaken of the Paschal Lamb, He took bread and blessed it, and gave it to His disciples, saying, Take ye and eat, this is My Body. And taking the chalice, He gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of this, for this is My Blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many for the remission of sins. Protestants pretend that these words are to be taken figuratively, the bread representing our Lord's Body and the wine His Blood. Holy Church, beloved brethren, has condemned this interpretation, and maintains that the words of our Divine Lord must be understood in a literal sense, so that when these heavenly words are pronounced by the priest in the Mass, the bread is changed into the Body and the

wine into the Blood of Christ, and the incarnate Son of God is present on our altars, whole and entire, true God and true man. We are quite safe, beloved brethren, in following the decisions of the Church in such matters; for, being the pillar and ground of truth, and having been established by God to hand down to all generations the deposit of faith whole and intact, she cannot teach error, nor can the gates of hell or the powers of darkness prevail against her. "And I say to thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (St. Matt. xvi. 18). Besides, it would be preposterous to say that bread and wine are signs of the Body and Blood of Christ. The Apostles could not understand such language, nor is there the slightest connection between the one and the other to induce men to believe that our Lord spoke figuratively on that occasion. At that moment, when Christ was making His last testament, He must have used the plainest language possible. Again, He must have foreseen that His words would be taken literally, and that for fifteen hundred years the whole Christian world would be led astray and deceived by His own words—would adore as God what He meant to be a simple sign of His heavenly protection. Seeing all this, He did not utter a single word to prevent such fearful consequences. Can we reconcile this with His Divine attributes and His promise to be with His Church until the end of time? I may add that the words our Lord used in consecrating the

chalice are so clear that, to elude their cogency in favour of the Real Presence, Protestants have been forced to say that the text had been corrupted. "This is the Chalice," as we read in St. Luke, "the new testament in My Blood, which shall be shed for you" (St. Luke xxii. 20). As the word ἐκχυνόμενον (poured out) necessarily refers to the word ποτήριον (cup), it follows that the cup or chalice was shed for us. The Blood of Christ was therefore in the chalice, for, when the cup was poured out, it was not the wine that was in the chalice before the consecration, but the Blood of Christ, there present after the consecration, that was shed for us. Otherwise wine, and not blood, would have been poured out for us, and Christ would have redeemed us with wine and not blood, an assertion that is simply absurd. The word ἐκχυνόμενον (poured out) referring necessarily to the word ποτήριον (Cup), it is evident that the Blood that was poured out for us upon the Cross was contained in the Cup He presented to His disciples. A similar argument is founded on the words of the consecration of the bread: "This is My Body which is given for you" (St. Luke xxii. 19); and, as He gave His real body for us, having really suffered on the Cross the ignominious death of a slave, it follows that what He gave His Apostles was likewise His true Body, and not a mere figure.

Among the ancients, as we read in À Lapide, all covenants were ratified by calling upon God to wreak vengeance on the first who should break his word.

Usually an animal was offered up in sacrifice, and a prayer said, invoking the Deity to strike dead in the same way the first who should prove faithless to his engagement. This was also the custom amongst the Jews. We read in Exodus that Moses "took the blood, and sprinkled it upon the people, and he said: This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words" (Exodus xxiv. 8). Also, in the new dispensation, the covenant between God and His people was confirmed by the shedding of blood. The words, "This is the Chalice, the new testament in My Blood, which shall be shed for you" (St. Luke xxii. 20), may be interpreted in the following manner: Herein is contained My testament, the new covenant between heaven and earth, by which I promise you everlasting life, if you will only keep My commandments. This covenant is written not with ink but with My blood, which is contained in this Chalice, as a paper contains the writing of a testament.

St. Paul furnishes us with another argument in favour of this doctrine. After reminding the Corinthians of this divine institution in the same words as those used by the three Evangelists, the Apostle insists upon the necessity of approaching the holy altar with good dispositions. "Therefore," says the Apostle, "whosoever shall eat this bread or drink the Chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and of the Blood of the Lord" (1 Cor. xi. 27). To be guilty of the body of our Lord means to be

guilty of a sin similar to that of the Jews who put Him to death; and how could we be guilty of such a grievous sin by partaking unworthily of a little consecrated bread? "Let a man prove himself," says the Apostle, "and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of the Chalice. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Body of the Lord" (1 Cor. xi. 28, 29). These words imply the Real Presence. Is it possible that the eating, in a state of sin, a morsel of bread should entail upon a man everlasting perdition? Again, could we be condemned for not discerning the body of our Lord, if His body was not in reality present?

The holy Fathers, beloved brethren, are all unanimous in teaching this doctrine. St. Ignatius, who lived in the first century, refers to the Blessed Eucharist in the following terms: "They," says the holy Martyr, alluding to certain heretics of the first ages, "abstain from the Holy Eucharist because they do not believe it to be the body of our Saviour"!—"Ab eucharistia abstinent, eo quod non confitentur eucharistiam carnem esse salvatoris nostri Jesu Christi." "We are taught," says the apologist of the second century, Justinus, in his letter to the Roman Emperor, "that the Eucharist is the flesh and blood of the Incarnate Son of God"—"Incarnati illius Jesu et carnem et sanguinem esse edocti sumus." St. Irenæus refuted those who denied the resurrection of the dead by appealing to the doctrine of the Real

Presence. "How can they," says that illustrious Doctor of the second century, "deny the resurrection of one who has been fed with the Body and Blood of Christ?" "Our bodies," says Tertullian, "are nourished with the flesh and blood of Christ, that our souls may be fattened with the Divinity." St. Cyprian, speaking of fallen sinners who approached the Sacrament without doing penance for their sins, declares that they offered violence to the Body and Blood of Christ. In the fourth century we have the testimony of St. Hilary: having quoted the words of St. John, "My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed" (St. John vi. 56), he draws the conclusion that our Lord must have meant His real flesh and blood. In the same century St. Cyril of Jerusalem expressed himself on this subject in the following remarkable terms: "Since Jesus Christ, in speaking of the bread, declared that it was His Body, and in speaking of the wine, declared that it was His Blood, who could ever presume to question the truth of His doctrine? At the marriage of Cana He changed water into wine by His (only) word, and can we hesitate to believe Him when He declared that He changed the wine into His own Blood?" St. Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, made the following profession of faith: "I believe," said that learned prelate, "that by the power of God the bread is changed into the Body of Christ." "Let us not consider," says St. John Chrysostom, "what our eyes behold, but His heavenly word. His word is infallible, and our senses are liable to err. Since,

therefore, the Son of God said, 'This is My Body,' let us believe, and look on His Body with the eyes of faith, for Christ has given us nothing sensible, but, under outward appearances, He gives us what faith alone will enable us to perceive." St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Cyril of Alexandria, and all the Fathers of the first ages of the Church, express their belief in the Real Presence in the clearest language possible. The words of St. Ambrose are so beautiful that we cannot pass them by. One would imagine that the illustrious Bishop of Milan had written to refute the heretics of the present day: "I implore all who are about to partake of the divine mysteries," says the Saint, addressing the neophytes of his day, "to consider which is the more excellent, the food God gave the Israelites in the desert—or the Flesh of Christ, Which is the Flesh of Him that is Life itself. Water came out of the rock on behalf of the Israelites, but for you blood flowed from the wounds of Christ Himself. The food and beverage of the old law were figures and shadows, but the food and beverage of which we speak are the reality itself. If what you admired was only a shadow, how great must be the reality whose shadow seemed so worthy of your admiration! As light surpasses the shadow, and truth the figure, so the Body of the Creator of the world excels the manna that fell from heaven. But you will say, Who will persuade me that I receive the Body of Jesus Christ, when I see something else? This rests to be demonstrated. We have innumer-

able examples to prove that what we receive at the altar is not what has been fashioned by nature, but that which has been consecrated by a special blessing, and that blessing is more powerful than nature, for it changes nature itself. Moses cast his rod on the ground and it became a serpent, and putting forth his hand, he caught it, and it became a rod in his hand. If the mere blessing of a man had sufficient power to change the nature of things, what shall we say of that divine blessing in which the words of Christ work everything that is wrought? If the word of Elias brought down fire from heaven, shall not the word of Jesus Christ change the nature of things? You have read, in the history of Creation, of the word that God spake and all things were made. If the word of Jesus Christ was powerful enough to create out of nothing that which had no being, cannot that same omnipotent word change into other natures things that existed already? For no one will deny that it is more difficult to create out of nothing than to change the nature of things that are already in existence. But why have recourse to such proofs? Let us consider the examples our Lord has given us, and establish the mystery of the Blessed Eucharist by the example of the Incarnation itself. The existence Jesus took from Mary, did it follow the ordinary course of nature? It is evident that such order was not observed, as man had no part therein. It was evidently against the order of nature that a virgin became a mother; and the body that descends upon

our altars is the same as the one that was born of the Virgin Mary. Why, then, do we seek the order of nature in the production of the Body of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, since it was against the laws of nature that this Saviour was born of the Virgin Mother?"

Besides, the liturgies of all Churches, beloved brethren, allude frequently to the Real Presence. In the Coptic liturgy, which is one of the oldest of books of common prayer, the Almighty is invoked and implored to change the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. The liturgy of Alexandria contains the following prayer: "O Lord, convert this bread into the Body, and the wine into the Blood of Christ." From the public prayers that were said in the Oriental and Western Churches, we are bound to conclude that the doctrine of the Real Presence prevailed everywhere from the very beginning. Again, this doctrine is professed by all heretics of the first ages, who, being the mortal enemies of Rome, would never have received it had they not been convinced that its origin was divine. Furthermore, beloved brethren, the atrocious calumnies that were made against the primitive Christians suppose the doctrine of the Real Presence. Being bound to secrecy, the Christians of the first ages could not explain this mystery, and thus prove the falsehood of the charges that were brought against them. Rather than betray these sacred mysteries into the hands of the heathen, they suffered all kinds of torment, their constancy

under the most fearful trials being the strongest possible proof that we can have of the divine faith with which they were animated. Let us, beloved brethren, follow their example and believe with a firm and unwavering faith that our Lord is present on our altars. Let us also dispose ourselves to approach this Sacrament frequently, remembering that it will be unto us a pledge of immortality. "He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day" (St. John vi. 55). Far from keeping us from the Blessed Sacrament, the thought of our unworthiness should excite in our hearts true sorrow for our sins, and a vivid desire of removing every impediment that could prevent us from approaching the source of all holiness, having always present before our eyes the words of Jesus Christ: "Amen, amen, I say unto you, except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you" (St. John vi. 54).

AMEN.

LVII.

ON THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

"And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks, He distributed to them that were set down."—ST. JOHN vi. 11.

WE read in this day's Gospel an account of the wonderful manner in which Jesus fed five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes. The people having passed the whole day listening to our Divine Lord, He was unwilling to send them away fasting, and asked His Apostles what he should do to provide for them. Philip declared that two hundred pennyworth of bread would not suffice for each one to have a mouthful. There was a boy there, said Andrew, who had five loaves and two fishes; but what were they amongst so many? Jesus ordered the men to be seated, and, giving thanks, distributed the bread to His disciples, who, in their turn, divided it among the people, and likewise the fishes; and with five loaves and two fishes he fed five thousand men. Also, with the fragments that remained the Apostles filled twelve baskets.

The next day, as our Lord was preaching in the synagogue at Capharnaum, the very men on whose behalf He had performed this wonderful miracle

came to hear Him. "You seek Me," said Jesus, "not because you have seen miracles, but because you did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting" (St. John vi. 26, 27). They ask Him what they should do to have that imperishable food, and He tells them that they must believe in Him. "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He hath sent" (St. John vi. 29). "I am," says Jesus, "the Bread of Life; he that cometh to Me shall not hunger, and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst" (St. John vi. 35). "The Jews, therefore, murmured at Him because He had said, I am the living Bread which came down from Heaven; and they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How, then, saith He, I came down from Heaven?" (St. John vi. 41, 42). And our Lord reproached the Jews for murmuring at His words promising everlasting life to those who believed in Him. "I am," said Jesus, "the Living Bread which came down from Heaven; if any man eat of this Bread he shall live for ever, and the bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world" (St. John vi. 51, 52). Our Lord alluded to the Blessed Eucharist, and wished that His words should be taken in the literal sense, otherwise the Jews would not have cried out, being scandalized at such language, "How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?" (St. John vi. 53). And Jesus confirmed them in the interpretation they had

put upon His words. "Amen, amen, I say unto you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall have no life in you. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me, and I in Him" (St. John vi. 54-57). Our Lord could not express the doctrine of the Real Presence in clearer terms, and seeing that this doctrine was a scandal to the Jews and His disciples, He used not one word to undeceive them, but insisted, on the contrary, upon their believing Him when He told them that He should feed them with His own Flesh and Blood.

"As the Living Father," said Jesus, "hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me the same also shall live by Me. This is the bread that came down from Heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth this bread shall live for ever" (St. John vi. 59). And as "many, therefore, of His disciples, hearing it, said, This saying is hard, and who can hear it?" (St. John vi. 61), Jesus exclaimed, "Doth this scandalize you? If, then, you shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before? It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life" (St. John vi. 62-64). These words have the same meaning as those that He used in addressing the Jews.

"No man can come to Me unless it be given him by My Father" (St. John vi. 66). The truths that I announce can be only understood by those that are enlightened from above, who have received the divine grace, that heavenly light that will enable all My faithful followers to believe in Me and in the promises that I have made. Certainly our Lord would not have allowed the Jews and His disciples to leave Him had it been possible for Him to explain away His doctrine. One word would have been sufficient, one word would have saved the men that He loved so much; but that word our Lord could not utter, for He could not sacrifice one tittle of the doctrine that He had come to announce. Jesus, turning to His disciples, asked them whether they also would leave Him. Simon Peter replied: "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we have believed and have known that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God" (St. John vi. 69, 70). Peter did not understand his Master better than the other disciples, but he knew that Jesus, Who was the Son of God, was incapable of being deceived, or of deceiving; and he believed this mystery on the authority of his heavenly Master. Let us follow the example of Peter, and believe on the authority of God that we receive His Divine Son each time that we approach the Sacrament of the Altar. We believe that the moment the words of consecration are pronounced by the priest in the Mass, the bread is changed into the Body and the wine into the Blood of Christ, and

that Christ, whole and entire, true God and true man, is really present on our altars under the appearance of bread and under the appearance of wine. Let us prepare ourselves for the reception of this most Blessed Sacrament, having always impressed upon us the words of Christ, Who declares that this Heavenly Food is a pledge of immortality: "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever" (St. John vi. 52). Fattened with the Body of Christ, to use the words of Tertullian, invigorated with His Blood, we shall overcome all dangers and persevere until death in the grace of God, in His Divine friendship. This Food will be unto us a source of strength in all our trials. It fortified martyrs, and enabled them to shed their blood for our holy religion. It will also inflame us with such love for Christ, that we shall suffer as long as we are separated from Him, and shall long for that day that shall see us united with our dear Lord and Master.

AMEN.

LVIII.

ON THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of Man will give you, for Him hath God the Father sealed."—St. John vi. 27.

In these words our Lord, beloved brethren, addressed the Jews who had come to listen to Him whilst He preached in the synagogue of Capharnaum. Having, the day before, worked on their behalf the most stupendous miracle, He now upbraids them for neglecting the doctrine He announced, and following Him only for the loaves and fishes. "Labour not," He said, "for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting" (St. John vi. 27). He exhorts them to seek first the kingdom of heaven, spiritual graces, and especially that Food that endureth for ever, the Blessed Eucharist, which He will give to all who believe in Him. The Jews asked for a sign from heaven, so that they might believe. "What sign, therefore, dost Thou show that we may see and may believe Thee; what dost Thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert, as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat" (St. John vi. 30, 31). Moses fed us for forty

years in the wilderness with celestial bread, and Moses was not the Messiah. In order, therefore, that we may acknowledge Thee as such, and receive Thy doctrine, work on our behalf a miracle still greater than the one performed in favour of our forefathers whilst they wandered in the desert. "Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say to you, Moses gave you not bread from heaven, but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven" (St. John vi. 32). Our Lord did not work a miracle, for those that He had already performed were quite sufficient to prove the truth of His doctrine. He told the Jews that the bread that He would give was far superior to the manna, which was not a heavenly bread in the true sense of the word. Those who partook of the bread that He should give would have everlasting life, happiness in this world, and celestial bliss in the world to come.

And Jesus said unto them: "I am the Bread of Life; he that cometh to Me shall not hunger, and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst" (St. John vi. 35). Again our Lord alludes to the Blessed Eucharist. The Tree of Life that was planted in the midst of the Garden of Paradise would have enabled our first parents to live a life of happiness and bliss in this world until God called them to His heavenly kingdom. In a similar manner the Holy Eucharist feeds and nourishes our souls, so that we may live a supernatural life in this world that will entitle us to celestial beatitude in the next.

"But I said unto you, that you also have seen Me, and you believe not. All that the Father giveth to Me shall come to Me, and him that cometh to Me I will not cast out" (St. John vi. 36, 37). Having declared that He had conferred in vain the most signal favours upon an incredulous people, Jesus alludes to the vocation of the Gentiles. His own nation, who refused to believe, having been rejected, God would give their inheritance to the heathen, and out of the very stones raise up children unto Abraham. "Jam, jam, venturas gentes significat et jacturam gratiæ quam facturi erant Judæi minatur." "Jesus alludes already," says St. Cyril, "to the vocation of the Gentiles, and to the rejection that the Jews were about to suffer at the hands of God."

"Because I came down from heaven not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me, now this is the will of My Father Who sent Me, that of all that He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again in the last day" (St. John vi. 38, 39). Jesus tells the Jews that He will protect His faithful followers, and, like another Moses, lead them safe unto the Promised Land. The reward that He has in store for them is everlasting life, a happiness that shall follow immediately the glorious resurrection from the dead.

"The Jews therefore murmured at Him because He had said, I am the living Bread which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the Son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?

How, then, saith He, I came down from Heaven?" (St. John vi. 41, 42). They could not understand how Jesus could have come down from Heaven and be unto them the Bread of Life. "Jesus therefore answered, and said to them: Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to Me except the Father who hath sent Me draw him, and I will raise him up in the last day" (St. John vi. 43, 44). Our Lord impressed upon His hearers the necessity of addressing their prayers to His heavenly Father, who would enlighten them and draw them to Him. Divine grace, beloved brethren, will alone draw us to God, will quicken and ennoble our actions, and enable us to persevere until the end. This grace God grants to all, but more abundantly to those who avail themselves of it and bring forth fruit a hundredfold. The grace of God enlightens the mind, inflames the heart, and ennobles our actions. Without this heavenly gift man is incapable of doing anything towards his salvation. Aided by the grace of God, he can do wonders and perform works that will entitle him to an everlasting reward. The grace of God sanctifies us, purifies our souls, so that we become partakers of His Divinity, the temples of the Holy Ghost, and heirs of an everlasting inheritance.

"It is written in the Prophets: And they shall all be taught of God. Everyone that hath heard of the Father and hath learned cometh to Me" (St. John vi. 45). Our Lord confirms His doctrine by the teaching of the Prophets, who had announced that

God Himself would be the teacher of nations, and give them to His Son for an inheritance.

"Not that any man hath seen the Father but he who is of God. He hath seen the Father. Amen, amen, I say unto you, he that believeth in Me hath everlasting life. I am the Bread of Life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead. This is the Bread which cometh down from heaven, that if any man eat of it he may not die" (St. John vi. 46-50). Jesus tells the Jews that the way God works upon the souls of men is quite imperceptible to the senses. It is the heart, the inward man, that He addresses and persuades by the impulse of His heavenly grace. He again reminds His hearers of the miraculous bread that He would give to all who believed in Him, a bread far superior to the manna, for it would confer immortality upon all who should partake of it. "I am the Living Bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever, and the bread that I will give is My Flesh, for the life of the world. The Jews, therefore, strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" (St. John vi. 51-53). Our Lord promises to give His own Flesh to be the food of their souls. "And the bread that I will give is My flesh" (St. John vi. 52). Scandalized at such language, the Jews cried out: "How can this man give us His Flesh to eat?" (St. John vi. 53). Interpreting His words in a literal sense, they understood Jesus to say that He would feed them with His own

Flesh and Blood. These words taken in a figurative sense, as Protestants explain them, could not in the least scandalize the Jews. Did Jesus undeceive them? Did He tell them, as he told Nicodemus, that His words should be taken figuratively? Far from undeceiving them and explaining away His words, He insisted upon their taking them literally, inculcating in the strongest language possible the necessity of eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood. "Amen, amen, I say unto you, except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you" (St. John vi. 54). These words prove, also, the necessity of receiving the Holy Eucharist. The Divine precept is binding upon all, children alone excepted. In the first ages of the Church it was customary to give the Blessed Sacrament to children of the most tender age, even to those who had not attained the use of reason. In the Western Church, however, this custom exists no longer, and the Council of Trent has declared that the Divine precept regards adults alone. It does not follow from these words of our Lord that all Christians are bound to receive the Holy Sacrament under the form of wine. It is true that this custom existed in the primitive Church, but it was abolished on account of the abuses that took place from distributing the Blessed Sacrament under that form. Jesus being now immortal, His Blood cannot be separated from His Body, so that we receive Him whole and entire, true God and true man, His Flesh and Blood, soul and Divinity, under either kind,

whether we partake of the Host or of the Chalice only. On this account St. Paul says that "Therefore, whosoever shall eat this bread or drink the Chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord" (1 Cor. xi. 27). And Christ Himself tells us that "If any man shall eat of this bread he shall live for ever" (St. John vi. 52). Besides, this doctrine is founded on what was practised in the very first ages of the Church. When it was customary to receive under both kinds, exceptions were made on behalf of the sick and of those who were suffering persecution at the hands of the enemies of our holy religion. They were allowed to communicate under one kind, and if the Sacrament were not valid in such cases the Church of God could have never authorized them to do so. It is also well known that infants who communicated in the first ages partook of the cup alone.

"He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day. For My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood abideth in Me and I in him" (St. John vi. 55-57). The Holy Eucharist is truly our spiritual food. It increases the grace of God in our souls, cures our infirmities, and strengthens us against the innumerable temptations to which we are exposed. It is unto each one of us a pledge of immortality. Theologians even maintain that it gives spiritual life, in case we receive it with attrition in mortal sin of which we are not conscious.

"As the Living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me the same also shall live by Me" (St. John vi. 58). As I receive My being from the Father, Who is the Fountain of Life, so I will vivify all those who shall partake of this Heavenly Food. I will communicate unto them immortality. "Approach this Sacrament," says St. Ambrose, "and you shall have your fill, for it is food; approach and drink, for it is a living spring; approach and be enlightened, for it is a shining light; approach and be free, for where the spirit of God is there is freedom; approach and be forgiven, for it effaces sin."

"This is the bread that came down from heaven, not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead. He that eateth this bread shall live for ever. These things He said teaching in the synagogue in Capharnaum. Many, therefore, of His disciples hearing it, said, This saying is hard and who can hear it?" (St. John vi. 59-61). The disciples began also to murmur, for they could not understand how He could give them His Flesh to eat and His Blood to drink, and our Lord, Who loved them so tenderly, did not tell them that they misunderstood, that His words should be taken figuratively. He did not utter one word to explain them away, to undeceive His disciples. On the contrary, in order to confirm them in their belief, and to make them see that the thing was possible, he appealed to the greatest of miracles. "But Jesus knowing in Himself that His disciples murmured at

this, said to them, Doth this scandalize you? If then you shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?" (St. John vi. 62, 63). To convince His hearers of the truth of His doctrine and the feasibility of His promise, He appealed to His omnipotent power, reminding them at the same time that faith, which is the gift of Heaven, would alone enlighten them and draw them to Him. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life" (St. John vi. 64). Faith alone will enable you to understand the words that I have uttered. I do not mean to give you My Flesh to eat in a carnal manner as you have been accustomed to eat the flesh of animals. But under the appearances of bread and wine I mean to give you My Flesh and Blood, My Soul and Divinity, and this doctrine you cannot grasp because you have not received the light of faith, which comes from above. "But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that did not believe, and who he was that would betray Him. And He said, Therefore did I say to you, that no man can come to Me unless it be given him by My Father. After this many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him" (St. John vi. 65-67). Jesus attributed their incredulity to their not having received from God those efficacious graces that would have opened their minds to the necessity of believing the doctrine He announced. Their infidelity to the favours already received prevented God from granting

those abundant graces that would have secured their eternal salvation. We should therefore, beloved brethren, be most careful to follow the voice of heaven in things of the smallest moment, for the neglect of grace may expose us to everlasting perdition.

"Then Jesus said to the twelve, Will you also go away? And Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and have known that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God" (St. John vi. 68-70). Thy words we understand not, but we believe, for we know Thy power, and that Thou canst fulfil Thy promise to feed us with Thy Body and Blood. Thou art omnipotent, and Thy words are conducive to everlasting life. Thou art Christ, the Son of the Living God.

AMEN.

LIX.

ON THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

"Wherefore when He cometh into the world He saith, Sacrifice and Oblation Thou wouldest not, but a body Thou hast fitted to Me. Holocausts for sin did not please Thee. Then said I, Behold I come (in the head of the book it is written of Me), that I shall do Thy will, O God."—HEB. x. 5-7.

INTERPRETING these words, the Apostle tells us, beloved brethren, that our Lord, abolishing the sacrifices of the old law, offered Himself to His heavenly Father for the redemption and sanctification of the human race. "By one Oblation He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. x. 14). By the Sacrifice of the Cross He redeemed us, a price of infinite value having been paid for our ransom. As, however, the merits of that great Sacrifice are applied to our souls by divine grace and the Sacraments, and especially by the Eucharist and the Holy Mass, I propose to-day to say a few words on the august sacrifice of the new law.

By "sacrifice" we mean the oblation made to God alone by a lawful minister, of a visible and sensible thing, accompanied by the destruction of the thing offered, in order to acknowledge His supreme dominion over all creatures, and to render the homage due to

Him. In the old law there were different kinds of sacrifices. The holocaust in which the whole victim was consumed by fire was offered up to render God that homage that was due to His infinite Majesty alone, and to acknowledge in the most perfect manner possible His supreme power over life and death. In the thanksgiving offering, which was made to God to thank Him for favours received, the victim was not totally destroyed, but partly consumed by the priest and those who offered it. The sin and peace offerings were made to render God propitious, to pacify Him, and to induce Him to grant His graces and favours to His priests and people. On these occasions both priests and people partook of the sacrifices.

The sacrifices of the old law, which were only pleasing to God inasmuch as they were the types and figures of that of Calvary and of the most holy sacrifice of the Mass, have been abolished, and a far greater one has been substituted in their stead. "Sacrifices and oblations and holocausts for sin Thou wouldest not, neither are they pleasing to Thee. . . . Then said I, Behold, I come to do Thy will, O God. He taketh away the first that He may establish that which followeth. In the which will we are sanctified by the oblation of the Body of Jesus Christ once" -(Heb. x. 8-10).

The Holy Mass, beloved brethren, is, in the words of the Catechism, the sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ, really present on the altar under the appearances of bread and wine, and offered to God for the

living and the dead. This sacrifice is one and the same sacrifice with that of the Cross, inasmuch as Christ, Who offered Himself a bloody Victim on the Cross to His heavenly Father, continues to offer Himself in an unbloody manner on the altar through the ministry of His priests. Holy Church teaches that the Blessed Eucharist is a true sacrifice. When the words of consecration are pronounced by the priest in the Mass, the bread is changed into the body, and the wine into the Blood of Christ, Who, being truly, really, and substantially present under the appearance of bread and under the appearance of wine, true God and true man, offers Himself in an unbloody manner to His heavenly Father as a sacrifice for the living and the dead. This sacrifice is the same as that of the Cross, the Victim and the High Priest being the same, and there being only a difference in the manner in which it is offered up. On the Cross Christ died once for all, redeeming and ransoming us poor sinners, not with gold and silver, but with His own most precious Blood; in the Mass, in which He dies mystically, He commemorates that great sacrifice, and applies to our souls its priceless merits. The separate consecration of the bread and wine represents that separation of the Body and Blood of Christ that took place when He died upon the Cross. The consecrated species of bread representing the Body, and the consecrated species of wine the Blood of Christ, there is made, each time Holy Mass is said, a memorial of His Passion and Death; and His death, in the words

of St. Paul, is thus shown forth until His second coming.

The Sacrifice of the Mass is offered up for four ends —to give supreme honour and glory to God, to thank Him for all His benefits, to obtain pardon for our sins, and all other graces and blessings through Jesus Christ (Catechism). Each time that Mass is said, a memorial is made of the sacrifice of Calvary. Christ dies mystically upon our altars, and, being present under the appearances of bread and wine, He appears before His heavenly Father with the marks of death upon Him, the Lamb standing, as it were, slain for the salvation of men. He thus glorifies His heavenly Father, renders Him supreme homage, and proclaims by His own annihilation under the sacramental elements that God is the Lord of the universe, the Master of life and death, and that all creatures depend upon Him for their very being.

The mystical death our Lord suffers upon our altars recalls to His heavenly Father all that He underwent, the cruel sufferings He bore for the salvation of men, and moves Him to have pity upon us, and to grant us those graces that will enable us to do penance for our sins, and to persevere until the end in the profession of our holy religion.

The holy Mass is also a sacrifice of thanksgiving. By it we give thanks to God for the innumerable favours He has conferred upon us, the Gift we offer in return, the Victim we present before His throne, being no other than His only-begotten Son, the

Lamb that was immolated from the beginning of the world. This sacrifice is not in the least derogatory to that of the Cross. It is the same Sacrifice, the High Priest and the Victim being one and the same, and it derives all its efficacy from the Passion of Christ, Whose infinite merits it applies to our souls.

The Eucharist is a true sacrifice. Our Lord being a Priest according to the order of Melchizedech, must have offered a sacrifice of bread and wine. "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Heb. v. 1). And Melchizedech offered a sacrifice of bread and wine. The only time Jesus offered bread and wine was at His Last Supper. He, then, unless we presume that He never fulfilled the duties of His office, must have acted as a priest of the order of Melchizedech, and offered to God a sacrifice according to that priesthood. When, therefore, at His Last Supper, He changed the bread into His Body, and the wine into His Blood, He offered a true sacrifice, and this sacrifice He commanded His Apostles and their successors, the bishops and priests of the Church, to do in memory of Him. Truly, the Eucharist is a real sacrifice, in which we acknowledge, by the destruction of the victim, the supreme power of God over all creatures. Jesus, who is present on our altars, in virtue of the words of consecration, dies mystically, as we explained above, so that each time Mass is said a memorial is made of the Sacrifice of the Cross, by which the price of our

redemption was paid, and its graces and merits are applied to our souls.

Another proof is taken from the Prophet Malachias: "I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will not receive a gift of your hand. For, from the rising of the sun, even to the going down, My Name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice and there is offered to My Name a clean oblation, for My Name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of Hosts" (Mal. i. 10, 11). In these words the prophet announced that the sacrifices of the old law should be rejected, and that a new sacrifice should be substituted in their place, and a pure victim offered up to the Lord of Hosts, from the rising to the going down of the sun. The offering of which he speaks is a real sacrifice, for it was to take the place of the sacrifices of the Jewish dispensation, and through it all nations were to be united in worshipping the true God. It was not of the Sacrifice of the Cross that the Prophet spoke; for this was offered only on Mount Calvary once for all, but of the Holy Eucharist, which is being offered everywhere, from the rising to the going down of the sun, and in which Christ, the purest of victims, immolates Himself, appearing before His Father as the Lamb, standing, as it were, slain for the sanctification of His heavenly Spouse.

A third proof is taken from the tenth chapter of the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians. "Behold Israel according to the flesh are not they

that eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar? What then? Do I say that what is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything? or that the idol is anything? But the things which the heathens sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God; and I would not that you should be made partakers with devils. You cannot drink the Chalice of the Lord and the chalice of devils; you cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord and of the table of devils" (1 Cor. x. 18-21). The Apostle condemns the Corinthians for eating meats that had been offered to false gods, telling them that they who partake of such meats are partakers of the sacrifices, and guilty of idolatry. Christians who have approached the Altar and partaken of the most holy Sacrifice of the Mass, must not defile themselves by eating the meat of animals that have been immolated in honour of heathen divinities. One sacrifice is contrasted with the other; and, as the heathen offered to his gods a genuine sacrifice, we naturally conclude that the Apostle considered the Holy Mass a perfect sacrifice in every sense of the word. "Ye cannot drink the Chalice of the Lord and the chalice of devils; you cannot be partakers of the table of the Lord and of the table of devils" (1 Cor. x. 21). The Apostle contrasts the table of the Lord with the table of the devil, and tells the Corinthians that they cannot be partakers of one and the other. The table of the Lord is the Altar upon which the Sacrifice of the Mass is offered, a sacrifice so pure that they who partake of it cannot, without defiling them-

selves, taste the victims that are offered upon heathen altars. By Communion we partake of the sacrifices that are offered, whether to God or to the devil. And, as the sacrifices of the heathen are offered to devils, Christians who have partaken of the Bread of Angels, of the most holy Sacrifice of the Mass, should avoid eating the meats that have been offered on the altars of false gods, and rendering themselves guilty of profanation and idolatry. Those who eat of the meats offered in sacrifice, argues the Apostle, sacrifice to idols, and are guilty of idolatry, communion being an integral part of the sacrifice. Those, too, who approach our Altars and communicate partake of the Body and Blood of Christ, of the most holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It is, therefore, most unbecoming that Christians who partake of the Eucharist and sacrifice unto God should eat the meats offered to idols, and sacrifice to false gods, to heathen divinities. The Apostle reproved the godless Corinthians for frequenting heathen temples and eating in public, and before the altar of false gods, the meats that had been offered in their honour, telling them that Christians who had sacrificed upon the altar of the true God should not defile themselves by eating profane meats that had been immolated in honour of false divinities.

The holy Sacrifice of the Mass has been offered in the Church from time immemorial, mention being made of it frequently by the holy Fathers of the primitive age. St. Ignatius, St. Clement of Rome,

St. Justinus, St. Irenæus, St. Cyprian, and others refer in their writings, as eminent Protestants are willing to acknowledge, to the most holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Besides, if the Eucharist were not a true sacrifice, the Christian would be the only religion that ever existed without one. Greek and barbarian, the most refined and the most uncivilized nations of antiquity, offered sacrifices to their gods. And God Himself, when He informed Moses how He should be worshipped, prescribed sacrifices, giving in detail all the ceremonies that should be observed each time they were offered up. A sacrifice being the most perfect act by which we acknowledge the supreme power of God and our dependence on Him for everything we possess, a religion that did not have one would be imperfect and unworthy of the Godhead. The holy Mass is said for the living and dead, for the just and for sinners, and even for the most hardened infidels. It remits the temporal punishment due to sin, and obtains on our behalf the graces we stand in need of in order to overcome temptation, to efface sin, and persevere in the friendship of God, It may be also applied to the souls in Purgatory, so that, the temporal punishment due to their sins being remitted, they may be relieved of their sufferings and admitted into the Divine Presence. The Sacrifice of the Cross may be, beloved brethren, compared to a fountain, to a living spring of water. All who wish to slake their thirst must approach this fountain and drink of its refreshing waters. It is by the holy Sacrifice of the

Mass that the waters of this inexhaustible fountain are applied to our souls. Let us avail ourselves of the great blessing that God has conferred upon us. Let His graces flow through this channel from their Fountain-head and be communicated to our immortal souls. Let us assist frequently at the holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Let us offer it up for ourselves, for the souls in Purgatory, for our departed friends, and in thanksgiving to God for the abundant graces He has bestowed upon the saints of heaven and upon the innumerable hosts of blessed spirits that surround His Throne, making that Celestial Paradise resound both day and night with the praises of the Lamb that has been immolated from the beginning of the world.

AMEN.

LX.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.

"He said, therefore, to them again, Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you. When He had said this He breathed on them, and He said to them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."—ST. JOHN xx. 21-23.

IN these words Jesus gave to His Apostles and their successors, the bishops and priests of the Church, the power to forgive sins—"a power," says St. John Chrysostom, "which God would give neither to the angels or archangels, for to these it was not said, 'Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.' Earthly princes have indeed their power of binding, but it is only for the body; but the binding of the priests reaches even to the soul, and ascends to heaven, insomuch that what the priests do below God ratifies above, and the Master confirms the sentence of the servant." Priests, beloved brethren, have been appointed by Christ judges in the tribunal of penance. The penitent, being at the same time accuser and accused, unbosoms himself to the minister of God, who absolves him from

his sins, and this sentence is ratified in heaven. "If your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow; and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool" (Isaias i. 18). The moment the water in baptism is poured out original sin is effaced, sanctifying grace being infused into the child's soul. In a similar manner, when the priest pronounces sentence and absolves in the tribunal of penance, the grace of God is communicated to the penitent, provided he be well disposed, God ratifying in heaven the sentence His minister pronounces upon earth. The outward act, it is true, is the work of man, the infusion of grace, the sanctification of the soul, being that of heaven. Protestants are scandalized at this doctrine, and cry out that God alone can forgive sin. It is quite true that God alone can forgive sin, but this power He can give unto men, as our Lord told the Jews, who accused Him of blasphemy for telling the man sick of the palsy that his sins were forgiven. "And, behold, they brought to Him one sick of the palsy lying in a bed. And Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the man sick of the palsy: Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee. And, behold, some of the Scribes said within themselves, He blasphemeth. And Jesus, seeing their thoughts, said: Why do you think evil in your hearts? Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk? But that you may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then said He to the man sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed and go

into thy house" (St. Matt. ix. 2-6). Here Jesus arrogated to Himself as man the power of forgiving sin, and this power having been questioned by the Scribes and Pharisees, He appealed to heaven, calling God to witness the truth of the assertion He had made, and forthwith was heard the voice of the Almighty, ratifying by a great miracle the teaching of His Divine Son. "But that you may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then said He to the man sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house" (St Matt. ix. 6). And this power Jesus gave to the priests of His Church, so that whenever they absolve us of our sins in the tribunal of penance, our iniquities are effaced, and our souls are clothed with grace and supernatural virtues. Of course, priests being the ministers of Christ, His substitutes, must act with great discretion, and absolve only those who are well disposed. They fill the place of Christ, being His representatives, and must act according to His divine will, and as if He were present, the power they exercise being not their own, but that of their heavenly Master.

Three things, beloved brethren, are required on the part of the penitent in the Sacrament of Penance —contrition, confession, and satisfaction. Contrition is a hearty sorrow for our sins, with a firm purpose of amendment. It must be internal, supernatural, universal, and supreme. By internal we mean that contrition must be in the heart and not merely on the lips. "This people honoureth Me with their lips, but

their heart is far from me" (St. Mark vii. 6). The penitent must regret his sin sincerely, and be determined to suffer any loss—to die—rather than offend God mortally. Being convinced that sin is the greatest of evils, he must be determined to avoid it at any cost, and to make reparation for the past. Our contrition must be supernatural. It must be the effect of God's grace, and be excited in us by supernatural motives. The thought of having offended God, Who is infinitely good in Himself and infinitely good to us, of the sufferings of Christ, of the malice of sin, and everlasting perdition to which we exposed ourselves, will kindle in our hearts true sorrow for sin and animate us with a firm purpose of amendment. Human motives are not sufficient. A woman, for instance, may be sorry for sin because it has brought shame and disgrace upon herself and family, blasting for ever her reputation in the eyes of the world, without God, Whom she has mortally offended, being in the least considered. Such a sorrow, being purely natural, will not avail in the least, God having no part in it. It is a sorrow of the world, that worketh death. Our contrition must be universal, it must extend to all mortal sins. It is impossible for us, whilst we have an affection for one mortal sin, to love God and hate sin as we should. Again, mortal sin cannot be effaced except through the infusion into the soul of sanctifying grace, and this grace is incompatible with mortal sin. Our contrition must be supreme. We must be more afflicted at having lost heaven than at

having suffered any other loss imaginable. We must esteem and love God above all things, and consider mortal sin as the greatest of evils, and one that should be avoided more than death itself. A man may be, however, thoroughly sorry for his sins without being in the least sensibly affected with the grief with which he is possessed. He may be more affected in the body at having suffered a temporal loss than at having offended God, it being natural to man, who is not always master of his feelings, to be moved more with temporal than with spiritual things.

Attrition, beloved brethren, that is, sorrow for sin excited in us by the consideration of the malice of sin, the loss of heaven, eternal perdition, and other supernatural motives, provided it be accompanied with confidence in God, and a firm resolution of avoiding sin in future, and doing penance for the past, disposes us to receive the grace of God in the Sacrament of Penance. "Imperfect contrition, which is called attrition," says the Council of Trent, "because it is excited by the consideration of the malice of sin, or the fear of hell-fire and eternal torments, does not make a man a hypocrite or a more hardened sinner, but is a heavenly gift, an impulse of the Holy Ghost, not, as yet, dwelling in the soul, but moving it, by whose assistance the sinner prepares the way for his sanctification. And, although it cannot, without the Sacrament, bring the sinner to a state of grace, yet it disposes him to receive it in the Sacrament of Penance."

The teaching of the Council of Trent is altogether in accordance with Scripture. "Be not afraid," says our Lord, "of them who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will shew you whom you shall fear: fear ye Him Who, after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell" (St. Luke xii. 4, 5).

Perfect contrition, beloved brethren, is a sorrow for our sins, arising purely from the love of God, and remits our sins even before we confess them; but, as our Catechism says, we are bound to confess them, if they are mortal, as soon as we go to Confession. "Charity," says the Apostle, "covereth a multitude of sins" (1 Peter iv. 8). Perfect contrition is not necessary for the Sacrament of Penance, attrition, which is excited in us by any supernatural motive, being sufficient to enable us to profit by the reception of the Sacrament. We should, however, each time we approach the tribunal of penance, make the greatest effort possible to inflame ourselves with the love of God, recalling to our minds His infinite perfections, His holiness, His justice, and the innumerable favours He has conferred upon us.

Contrition implies a firm purpose of amendment. We cannot be sincerely sorry for our sins without being at the same time firmly resolved to avoid offending God in future. This firm purpose must be supernatural; it must rise from motives known to us by faith, the fear of hell, the tortures of the damned, or any other motive revealed to us by the

word of God. The consideration of the sufferings of Christ, Who died on the Cross to blot out our sins, will inspire us with true contrition, and a firm resolution to die rather than offend God mortally. Can we gaze at Jesus Christ dying on the Cross the ignominious death of a slave, and remain callous and insensible to the transgressions of our past lives? The firm purpose must embrace all mortal sins, and also the dangerous occasions of sin. Should we hate from the bottom of our hearts ninety-nine sins out of a hundred, and be determined to avoid them, entertaining an affection for one mortal sin only, our contrition would be quite fruitless, would be unto us a snare and a delusion. The purpose of amendment not extending to all mortal sins, there would be no true contrition, which implies hatred of everything that is displeasing to God. Our good resolutions must be firm and efficacious. We must be determined to avoid not only sin, but the dangerous occasions of sin, being willing to apply the remedies prescribed by the priest, and to have recourse to prayer, to the Sacraments, and to all means that will enable us to overcome the temptations to which we may be exposed. We must make reparation for past sins, restore ill-gotten goods, and make restitution for any injury we may have done our neighbours; we must forgive our enemies, assist them in their wants, pray for them, and treat them as if they were our own flesh and blood. If we have calumniated or defamed our neighbour, we are bound before God to restore

his good name, and make reparation for one of the greatest sins that man can commit. These considerations will make us understand, beloved brethren, the importance of approaching the tribunal of penance. This Sacrament is a source of great blessings, not only to us Christians, but to the society in which we live. Men who frequently receive the Sacrament of Penance are not only good Christians, but excellent citizens. One day, a young man having asked our Lord what he should do in order to be saved, Jesus told him to keep the Commandments. Well, we know that this Sacrament will enable us to keep the Commandments, to love God above all things, and our neighbour as ourselves. Are we not, therefore, astonished at those who tell us that this Sacrament is a source of great evil, being unto men an enticement to sin. We have only, Protestants exclaim, to confess our sins in order to obtain forgiveness. This charge is founded, as we have proved, on total ignorance of the Sacrament, which demands on our part not only hatred of sin, but a firm resolution to die rather than offend God mortally. Protestants, beloved brethren, admit only two Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and those two are, in the eyes of most of them, mere ceremonies. Original sin, they say, has radically corrupted the human race, and man cannot by any means be inwardly and, in reality, cleansed of his sins, which are necessary manifestations of the sin of his first Parents, of the evil spirit that dwelleth in him. They add that faith alone will save him, for

it will cast the cloak of Christ over his hideous sores, and hide them from the sight of men. These ghastly sores, being incurable, never cease to suppurate, let him do what he will. He can hide them from view, but nothing else. In such a monstrous system Sacraments are quite useless, and all efforts we may make to be good perfectly barren. "Man," says Luther, "must follow the bent of his passions, and indulge appetites he cannot control." Such a system, beloved brethren, is not only fatal to the Sacrament of Penance, but is destructive of all society and of the work Christ came to do among men. He came to teach men the necessity of doing penance for their sins, of mortifying themselves, of becoming perfect as His heavenly Father is perfect.

AMEN.

LXI.

ON CONFESSION.

"And, behold, they brought to Him one sick of the palsy lying in a bed, and Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the man sick of the palsy, Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee."—St. Matt. ix. 2.

It was, beloved brethren, in the house of Simon that our Lord addressed the paralytic in the words quoted above. An immense crowd of people that had come from all parts of Galilee to be cured of their diseases having surrounded Peter's house, it would have been impossible for the man sick of the palsy to approach Jesus had not his friends carried him up to the top of the roof, and letting him down through the tiles, placed him at the feet of our Divine Lord. Seeing the faith with which the sick man was animated, Jesus forgave him His sins and restored him to health, proving by this miracle and the remarks He made, as St. Chrysostom observes, that as man He had the power to forgive sin, and as God He could read the most secret thoughts of the minds of men. "But that you may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then said He to the man sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house. And he arose, and went into his

house. And the multitude, seeing it, feared and glorified God, that gave such power to men" (St. Matt. ix. 6-8).

This power Jesus gave to the priests of His Church. "Whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth it shall be loosed also in heaven" (St. Matt. xvi. 19)—"a power," says St. John Chrysostom, "that was not given to the angels in heaven."

The power Christ gave to His ministers to forgive sin implies, beloved brethren, confession on the part of those who approach them with a view of availing themselves of so great a privilege. Priests, having been established by God judges in the tribunal of penance, must use this power with discretion, forgiving only those who are well disposed and resolved to amend their lives. They cannot know whether sinners are worthy of absolution or not unless they confess, not only in general, but in detail, declaring the number of their sins and the circumstances that aggravate their malice. Confession alone will enable the priest to decide whether the penitent is to be absolved or not, and what penance is to be imposed upon him. "It is evident," says the Council of Trent, "that priests cannot judge in the tribunal of penance without examining the penitent, nor can they impose a suitable penance if the sinner confess his sins in general, and not in detail and according to their number and malice. Before a judge gives a decision he must examine the witnesses and weigh

well everything that has been said, in favour of or against the accused. Priests, being appointed judges in the Sacrament of Penance, must act with great prudence, and put off or absolve the penitent according to the confession he makes and the dispositions with which he is animated."

The Catholic Church has always maintained this doctrine, and a few extracts from the works of the most eminent Fathers of the first ages will convince us that confession has been practised in the Church from the very beginning.

"Sinners," says Origen (253), "who are not ashamed to make known their faults to the priests of God may trust to be forgiven. As a man who suffers from indigestion is immediately eased by casting up the contents of his stomach, so the sinner who hides his sins is oppressed and almost suffocated with them; but if he becomes his own accuser, if he unbosoms himself to the priest, he vomits forth with his sins the cause of his internal disease. Only be circumspect, and consider whom you confess your sins to. Know well beforehand the physician to whom you expose your disease. Let him by condolence and compassion be infirm with the weak and shed tears with those who weep, so that you may have full confidence in one whom you have chosen as an able and compassionate physician, following and obeying him precisely, whatever advice he may give, or whatever precept he may impose upon you. If he consider your case so extreme that to be cured it should be

made public, believing that a public confession would be most useful for the edification of others and your own spiritual welfare, you should without hesitation follow the advice given, after full deliberation, of a most experienced physician." This language requires no comment. From the words of this great writer it is manifest that confession to a priest was practised in the very first ages of the Church. What, then, shall we think of the veracity of Protestants who tell us that confession was invented by the Popes in the thirteenth century? Origen, who was one of the great lights of the primitive Church, inculcates in words that cannot be controverted the necessity of private confession, exhorting the Christians of his day to have recourse to the Sacrament of Penance and to perform the penance imposed upon them by the priest. They must, should the priest deem it advisable, make a public confession of their sins, and accuse themselves before the whole Church. The illustrious Doctor distinguishes between private and public confession, which were both practised in the primitive ages, and insists upon the necessity of having recourse first to the priests, to the Sacrament of Penance, and of making afterwards a public confession, should the minister of God impose it as a penance. St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage in the third century, and Doctor of the Universal Church, is not less emphatic. "How far greater are they, both by their faith in God and fear of offending Him," says that illustrious martyr, "who, without having sacrificed

to idols, or received from magistrates a false declaration of having done so, but for having had only the wicked thought of committing themselves, have come and confessed with heartfelt contrition to the priest of the Most High, and implored a remedy for their spiritual wounds. Let every one confess his sins whilst he is still in this world, and his confession, the penance he performs, the absolution he receives from the priest, are acceptable before God." The illustrious Doctor of the African Church does not allude to public confession, as Protestants would have us believe, but to the confession made to a priest, and as it is practised at the present day in the Catholic Church. His words are so clear that all the sophistry of a Luther could not twist them so as to give them a different meaning. "If your bonds are not loosed," says St. Athanasius, "put yourselves into the hands of the disciples of Jesus Christ, for they have been appointed to untie them, in virtue of the power they have received from Christ: All that you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven, the sins shall be forgiven unto whom you shall forgive them." St. Athanasius was one of the most renowned champions of our holy religion, having been sent by God to defend His Church against the onslaught of the greatest enemies she ever had, against the implacable hatred of the followers of Arius. And this illustrious Doctor exhorts us to confess our sins to the ministers of God, to those men who have received from the Almighty the power of loosing and binding, the power

of forgiving sins. St. Hilary, of Poitiers, is most explicit on this matter. "In order that all should be kept within the bounds of duty," says the Saint, "the Son of God established the immoval tribunal of the Apostles, saying that those whom they should bind upon earth—that is, those whom they should leave in the bonds of their sins—would be also bound in heaven; and that those whom they should unloose and put in the way of salvation by granting the pardon which is attached to confession would be unloosed and absolved in heaven." "The ways of a merciful God towards sinners," says St. Basil, "are made manifest by these words: 'I wish not the death of a sinner, but that he should do penance and live.' But as the penance must be proportionate to the sins and disposition of the penitent, who must give signs of repentance, bring forth fruit worthy of penance, it is necessary for him to confess his sins to those who have been commissioned to dispense the mysteries of God." "Have," says St. Gregory of Nyssa, "greater confidence in him who has begotten you unto God than in those who have given you the life of the body. Disclose to your spiritual father whatever is most hidden in your bosom. Let him know the bottom of your heart, as you would show your doctor your most secret sores, and he will heal you." "If the infernal serpent," says St. Jerome, "hath bitten one of you, and if the unfortunate sinner remained obstinate and unwilling to lay bare his wound to his brother and his master, the master who could cure him with one word would

be quite useless to him." St. Augustine exhorts us not to put off our confession to the end; for we know not whether we shall be able at the hour of death to confess our sins to a priest. "Quod si ad ultimum vitæ steterit, nescit si sacerdoti peccata sua confiteri poterit." The words of St. John Chrysostom are so beautiful that they bear quoting a second time. "A power," says that Saint, "which God would not give either to angels or archangels, for to these it was not said, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Earthly princes have, indeed, their power of binding, but it is only for the body; but the binding of the priest reaches the soul, and ascends to heaven, insomuch that what the priest does below, God ratifies above, and the Master confirms the sentence of the servant." All Fathers of the primitive Church teach this doctrine; so that if Protestants, who are so fond of appealing to history, would only read their works, they would find that the teaching of the Church of the first ages of Christianity condemned them. And men who confess that the Church of God remained faithful to her heavenly mission during the first five centuries of the Christian age, cannot be in the least justified for rejecting her teaching in a point of vital importance.

Another proof is that of prescription. What the Church teaches to-day she always taught. Being, therefore, in possession, it is the duty of Protestants

to dislodge her. They must prove that her titles are invalid and her claims unfounded. Let them tell us when this doctrine was introduced into the Church, and by whom. Some pretended that it was established by a Pope in the thirteenth century, but the Fathers whom I quoted above, and who lived and wrote long before that period, are all unanimous in teaching the necessity of confession. Besides, the Church of Rome is not the only Church that inculcates this doctrine. The Greek Church teaches the same. When Protestants of the sixteenth century applied to the Greek Church to know what was her opinion on the matter, the Patriarch of Constantinople informed them that the Oriental Church had always inculcated the necessity of confession, never ceasing to proclaim publicly that priests had received from God the power to forgive sins. Confessions not only are heard by priests of the Patriarchal Church of Constantinople and other schismatic churches, but by those of all heretical churches of the East. Now, some of these churches have been separated from the Church of Rome for the last thirteen hundred years—from the beginning of the fifth century—and had this doctrine been invented by that Church after their separation, they would never have received it from her, they would never have professed it. Far from receiving this doctrine from a rival Church, they would have been only too happy to have had a pretext to justify their separation, and accuse Rome of innovating in matters of the greatest moment, and of tampering with the Word of God. They maintained this doctrine,

being convinced that it is contained in the deposit of faith, and handed down to them from the apostolic times themselves. Again, had confession been a human invention, we certainly should know the man that first imposed it on the Christian world. We know all heresiarchs by name, and one who would have surpassed them all could not have died without leaving his mark upon the world. History is, however, silent about such an individual, there being no traces of him in any of her pages. And can we conceive that a man could have introduced such a doctrine without meeting with opposition from priests and bishops and from the whole Christian world? Such a doctrine must have occasioned dissensions and divisions in the Church of God, and the slightest vestige of such discussions is to be found nowhere. We see, therefore, beloved brethren, that whether we consult Scripture, the writings of the Fathers, or the history of the Universal Church, we shall be obliged to admit that confession is a Divine institution, and that priests have received from God the power to forgive sin. Protestants themselves are beginning to acknowledge that their forefathers had fallen into error on this subject, and that confession is not a satanic but a divine invention. Their own ministers presume to hear confession, and exercise a power they never received from God, having no orders or right whatever to loose or unloose. Let us, therefore, beloved brethren, pray for those deluded men, and ask God to touch their hearts, so that there may be "one fold and one Shepherd." AMEN.

LXII.

ON SATISFACTION.

"For which cause I please myself in my infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ, for when I am weak then am I powerful."—2 Cor. xii. 10.

I have to-day, beloved brethren, to speak about another part of the Sacrament of Penance—satisfaction, or the penance imposed upon us by the priest. In sin we must consider the guilt and the punishment it entails upon the sinner. For mortal sin, this punishment is everlasting perdition, and this is remitted as soon as the sin has been forgiven, or commuted into a temporal one. It is evident from Scripture that there usually remains, after the remission of sin, a temporal punishment that we must undergo either in this world or the next. David, who had fallen into a grievous sin, was reproved by the prophet Nathan, and did penance. The Lord forgave His servant, but, to make him feel the enormity of his sin, He punished him severely, the child, the fruit of his iniquity, being cut off in its tender years. There is also the example of the Jews, of a whole nation. Their murmurs so exasperated God, that He decreed their destruction, and was only prevented from carrying out His threat

by the prayers and supplications of His faithful servant Moses. Although the Lord was appeased and reconciled with His people, the Jews were, nevertheless, treated with severity, having been condemned to die in the wilderness and in sight of the Promised Land. It is, therefore, evident from these and other passages of Holy Writ that there remains, after the remission of sin, a temporal punishment that we must suffer in this world or the next in order to satisfy the divine justice. We satisfy the divine justice for the sins we have committed, and for which we have obtained forgiveness, by our penitential works, by prayer, vigils, fastings, alms, and by performing the penance the priest imposes upon us in the Sacrament of Penance. Priests, who have the power of loosing and unloosing, must not, in dispensing the mysteries of God, neglect the interest of His divine justice. It being through their ministry that sin has been forgiven and the eternal punishment commuted into a temporal one, they are obliged to impose a penance, to see that the divine justice is at least partly satisfied, and that the penitent, whom they have set free, begins to atone for the past and to satisfy the claims of heaven. The penance imposed upon us by the priest does not dispense us from other penitential works. "Do penance," says our Lord, "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (St. Matt. iii. 2). Penitential works are most pleasing to God. The Ninevites who did penance, fasting and putting on sackcloth, were saved from certain destruction. "And

God saw their works, that they were turned from their evil way, and God had mercy with regard to the evil which He had said that He would do to them, and He did it not" (Jonas iii. 10). How often did the prophets tell the Jews, that if God found a few good men among them, He would not deliver them unto the Assyrians, nor suffer their city to be destroyed by their inveterate enemies! Manasses did penance, and was brought back to Jerusalem and restored to his kingdom. David lived a most penitential life, continually crying out that his very bones had, through his groaning, cleaved to his flesh. "I did eat ashes like bread," says the royal Prophet, "and mingled my drink with weeping, because of Thy anger and indignation" (Ps. ci. 10, 11). Our Divine Lord Himself frequently inculcates the necessity of mortification both by word and example. He lived a most mortified life, suffering frequently from hunger and thirst and from want of the very necessaries of life. And those who have walked in His footsteps are numerous indeed. The saints were so mortified, that one would take them for angels in human bodies. Our sufferings and penitential works are not in the least, beloved brethren, derogatory to the sufferings and Passion of Christ. They apply to our souls the priceless merits of His passion, and are pleasing to God, being offered up in union with those of His Divine Son. "But the soul," says the Prophet, "that is sorrowful for the greatness of evil she hath done, and goeth bowed down and feeble, giveth glory

and justice to Thee the Lord" (Baruch ii. 18). The sufferings of Christ and His prayer and sorrows in the garden do not dispense us from suffering. We must take up our cross and follow Jesus, and learn of Him to be meek and humble of heart. "The fruits of the Sacrament of Penance," says the Council of Trent, "are different from those of Baptism; for by Baptism we put on Christ, and become in Him altogether a new creature, receiving the full and entire remission of all our sins; but if we lose this happy state by sin, we can by no means acquire the same newness and integrity by the Sacrament of Penance without great weeping and labour on our part, the divine justice requiring it." The sins committed after Baptism being of a special malice, and denoting as they do great ingratitude on our part, are not forgiven unless we wash them out with our tears and groans, and thus, as far as we are able, satisfy the justice of God. As the penance imposed by the priest does not dispense us from penitential works, we should mortify our senses, our eyes, and especially our passions. We should mortify our pride, by acts of humility, and by bearing patiently the contempt and ill-treatment we receive at the hands of men, intemperance and gluttony, by great abstinence in eating and drinking. We should fast occasionally, and mortify the flesh. We should be resigned in all things to the will of Heaven, enduring the trials of life as sent by God in chastisement of our past sins. Labourers should offer their daily work in honour of

God, and accept it as a penance for the transgressions of their youth. Are we persecuted? Do we suffer from want? Do our children rebel against us? Are they unto us a source of great trial? What opportunities for doing penance and making reparation to the divine justice for the sins of our past lives! Let us be resigned in all things to the will of God, offering all these trials in expiation of our sins, availing ourselves of the crosses the Almighty in His goodness sends us, and enduring them for the sake of our crucified Lord. Let us follow the example of the saints, of the Christians of the primitive Church. How mortified they were in their lives! What severe penances did they not perform! In the early Church public penances were imposed upon certain notorious sinners. There were different classes of penitents. Some were forbidden the entrance of the Church. When the faithful entered the sacred edifice to pray, they stood at the door covered with ashes and sackcloth, and imploring their brethren to intercede for them before the throne of God. Others were admitted into the church, and remained until the Gospel, not being deemed worthy to assist at the most holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Even those, who were allowed to be present at the Holy Sacrifice, were obliged to prostrate themselves and to remain in that position during the whole of the service. These penances lasted for several years, and were imposed for sins that people commit at the present day without the slightest remorse of conscience. Holy Church im-

posed these penances upon her children, so that they might by their good works make reparation for their sins and appease the anger of God, Whose justice must be satisfied either in this world or in the next. If we do not do penance in this life, we must suffer in the next, and endure the excruciating flames of purgatory, until we have cancelled all our debts and fully satisfied, by our sufferings, the justice of God. Let us, therefore, whilst we are in this life, mortify ourselves in the flesh and its concupiscences. St. John tells us that there are three great evils that we have to contend with—the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life. We must mortify the flesh, and repress all our sensual appetites, subduing completely that vicious inclination that excites us incessantly to gratify our senses in things that are forbidden by the Word of God. By concupiscence of the eyes the Apostle means the inordinate desire we have of riches. We know that riches are a source of great evil, for the rich man who has placed his affections on the mammon of iniquity forgets his God, and not unfrequently abandons himself to sensuality and the most brutal pleasures. By pride of life, the Apostle means that inordinate desire that drives men to ambition and worldly honours. The proud man, who claims for himself the glory and honour that belongs to his heavenly Master, is sure to become, sooner or later, an object of hatred and contempt to God and man. These are the three great sources of sin. These are the three great evils

we have to contend with. Let us, therefore, humble ourselves; let us mortify the flesh; let us make unto ourselves friends out of the mammon of iniquity. "There was a certain rich man," said our Lord, "who had a steward, and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. He called him, and said to him, How is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship, for now thou canst be steward no longer. And the steward said within himself, What shall I do, because my lord taketh away from me the stewardship? To dig I am not able, to beg I am ashamed; I know what I will do, that when I shall be removed from the stewardship they may receive me into their houses. Therefore, calling together every one of his lord's debtors, he said to the first: How much dost thou owe my lord? And he said, A hundred barrels of oil. And he said to him, Take thy bill and sit down quickly and write fifty. Then he said to another, And how much dost thou owe? who said, An hundred quarters of wheat. He said to him, Take thy bill and write eighty. And the lord commended the unjust steward, forasmuch as he had done wisely; for the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. And I say to you, Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail they may receive you into everlasting dwellings" (St. Luke xvi. 1-9). The Lord, beloved brethren, praised the wicked steward, not for having acted unjustly, but for having shown great foresight in

providing for his temporal wants, and our Lord implored His followers to show the same wisdom in spiritual matters, in the work of their sanctification. He exhorted them to works of mortification, to works of charity, to assist the poor in their spiritual and temporal wants. "And I say to you, Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail they may receive you into everlasting dwellings" (St. Luke xvi. 9).

AMEN.

LXIII.

ON INDULGENCES.

"Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven."—ST. MATT. xviii. 18.

LAST Sunday, beloved brethren, I proved from Scripture and the teaching of the Church that, after the guilt has been remitted, there usually remains a temporal punishment due to sin, and that we must discharge this debt and satisfy the divine justice, by performing penitential works and the penance the priest imposes upon us in the Sacrament of Penance. We can also satisfy the divine justice by gaining the numerous indulgences that Holy Church has placed at our disposal. I propose to-day to explain the nature of an Indulgence, so that you may understand its importance and the necessity of gaining one whenever you possibly can. "An Indulgence," says the Catechism, "is the remission of the temporal punishment due to sin of which the guilt has been removed." An Indulgence is not, therefore, permission to commit sin, but the remission of the temporal punishment due to a sin that has been already forgiven. When we gain an Indulgence, Holy Church, in virtue of the

power she received from God of binding and loosing, applies to our souls by way of absolution the satisfactions of Christ and His saints. That the Church can grant Indulgences is manifest from Scripture. Christ gave to His Apostles and their successors the power of forgiving sins, of binding and loosing, of untying the bonds of sin, of removing all impediments that could hinder our entering the kingdom of heaven. As the temporal punishment due to sin prevents us from being admitted into the Divine Presence, it follows that the pastors of the Church must have received the power, not only of forgiving sin, but of cancelling the temporal punishment by means of Indulgences. The words of our Divine Lord: "Whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven" (St. Matt. xviii. 18), being taken literally and in their general sense, imply not only the power of forgiving sin, but also that of remitting the temporal punishment due to sin. By these words Christ gave to His pastors the power of loosing all bonds, of removing all impediments that could prevent our entrance into heaven. We must not forget that the saints who lived the most mortified lives, walking continually in the Divine Presence, and confessing their Lord notwithstanding the most fearful persecutions, not only atoned for their sins, but offered to God superabundant satisfactions. Some of them passed years in doing penance. Our Blessed Lady, although she had never fallen into sin, was

most remarkable for the austerities she practised—for the manner in which she bore her great trials and sufferings. Her life was a continual martyrdom. These superabundant satisfactions of Christ and His saints constitute what is called the treasure of the Church, and are dispensed by her pastors whenever they grant an Indulgence. Again, as there is in the Church a Communion of Saints, it is but natural that the satisfactions of the elect should be useful not only to themselves, but to those who are in a state of spiritual want, and that Holy Church should have power to distribute them among her children. St. Paul himself, as we read in his Epistle to the Corinthians, granted an Indulgence, having forgiven the incestuous Corinthian the penance he had imposed upon him. In the early Church, also, Indulgences were frequently granted to sinners, on whose behalf those who were about to die for Christ had interceded. The pastors of the Church, in consideration of the sufferings of the martyrs, treated public sinners with great clemency, and forgave part of their penances. And God must have approved of the manner in which those public sinners were treated, and ratified the sentence whereby the canonical penance was cancelled, granting remission in proportion to that to which their penance would have entitled them, otherwise the Indulgence with which they were treated would have done them more harm that good. The Indulgence granted in consideration of the sufferings of the saints must have applied to those sinners the merits of

Christ, just as well as if they had performed the penitential works prescribed by the Church. If the Indulgences had not this effect, our pastors, says St. Thomas, would not be justified in granting them, for by dispensing us from public penances, they would only condemn us to greater sufferings in Purgatory. This is the teaching not only of St. Thomas, but of all the Fathers of the primitive age. "We must," says St. Cyprian, "be indulgent toward our fallen brethren who come to us with letters of recommendation from the holy martyrs, whose intercession will be certainly of great benefit to them before the throne of God." That this was the doctrine of the early Church, is evident from the reproaches Tertullian levelled against those pastors, who presumed to grant Indulgences and to usurp the place of God Himself. The pastors of the Church received from God the power of binding and loosing, without any restriction whatsoever, of removing every obstacle imaginable. They can, therefore, remit not only the canonical penance, but the debt of the temporal punishment due to the divine justice, and this by applying to our souls, in virtue of the power of the keys, the superabundant satisfactions of Christ and His saints.

There are different kinds of Indulgences. A plenary Indulgence is the remission of all the temporal punishment due to our sins, so that if we died immediately after gaining this Indulgence whole and entire, we should be at once admitted into the Divine Presence. But to gain it in its entirety we must be free, not

only from all mortal sin, but from all affection for venial sin, and must be sincerely sorry for the slightest sin imaginable, it being impossible to obtain the remission of the temporal punishment for a sin that has not been forgiven. A partial Indulgence is the remission of part of the temporal punishment due to our sins. An Indulgence, for instance, of seven years is that remission of the temporal punishment which we should have obtained, had we performed the canonical penance during the space of seven years. What remission the canonical penance would have entitled us to we know not, but this we know, that an Indulgence of seven years would be equally efficacious before the throne of God. The Indulgences we gain may be applied to the souls in Purgatory by way of suffrage. Holy Church presents to God the satisfactions of Christ and His saints, and asks Him to accept them on behalf of the souls in Purgatory, so that they may be delivered from their sufferings.

The Jubilee is a plenary Indulgence granted every twenty-five years, and upon certain solemn occasions. Amongst the Jews a Jubilee took place every fiftieth year. The slaves were emancipated, debts were cancelled, and properties that had been alienated restored to their lawful owners. When the Pope grants a Jubilee, priests receive special powers in the tribunal of penance that enable them to cancel our debts, to set us free from the tyranny of the devil, and restore us to our lost inheritance. To gain an

Indulgence, we must be in a state of grace and fulfil the conditions that are prescribed. To gain the Jubilee, we must fulfil the conditions upon which it is granted. We must, as a rule, go to Confession and Communion, pray for the intentions of the Holy Father and the welfare of the Church, fast, give an alms, and visit certain churches. Confession and Communion are generally required for all plenary Indulgences. We may, however, without these conditions gain the plenary Indulgence that is attached to the Stations of the Cross. To gain this Indulgence, we should meditate at each Station for a few minutes on the Passion of our Lord, condoling with Him on His sufferings, and conclude by praying for the intention of the Holy Father and the welfare of the Church.

We now, beloved brethren, understand the nature of an Indulgence. It is the remission granted by the Church, in virtue of the power of the keys, of the temporal punishment due to our sins, the guilt of which has been remitted. The temporal punishment remaining after our sins have been forgiven, we satisfy the divine justice by our good works, and the Indulgences we gain. If we cancel not our debts in this life, we must do so in Purgatory, where we shall remain until we have paid the last farthing. Primitive Christians were so impressed with this doctrine, that to avoid the flames of Purgatory they underwent the most severe penances. Unfortunately, our charity has grown cold; we are no longer ani-

mated with the same spirit; we have become tepid in the service of God. Holy Church, however, knowing the weakness of her children, comes to our assistance, stretches forth her hands to lift us up and to aid us on our journey heavenwards. She enriches us with the inexhaustible treasures that Christ has placed at her disposal, and enables us to cancel our debts and to satisfy the divine justice for all the sins of our past lives. Can we hesitate to avail ourselves of such abundant graces, to drink of these refreshing waters, so that we may never thrist? "Whosoever drinketh of this water that I will give him shall not thirst for ever, but the water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into life everlasting" (St. John iv. 13, 14).

AMEN.

LXIV.

ON EXTREME UNCTION.

"Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him."—St. James v. 14, 15.

I PROPOSE to-day, beloved brethren, saying a few words on the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. Being all doomed to die, it is but right that we should have some knowledge of the great means that Christ has given us of dying a happy death. Extreme Unction is a Sacrament conferred by the holy anointing and prayers of the priest for the spiritual and corporal relief of the sick. It is certainly a Sacrament. The anointing with holy oil, together with the words that are pronounced when the Sacrament is administered, represent the effects of God's grace and the remission of sin. They not only represent, but communicate to the dying man actual and sanctifying grace. This Sacrament must have been instituted by Christ, for He alone could have attached divine grace to a visible sign. Extreme Unction is, therefore, a Sacrament, being an outward sign of inward grace, ordained by Christ, by which grace is given to our souls. Besides,

we have the authority of the Church of God, of that Church that has been founded upon a rock, and against which the gates of hell shall never prevail. Holy Church has always maintained this doctrine, and her teaching is founded on Scripture and tradition. "Is any man," says St. James, "sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him" (St. James v. 14, 15). In these words we have all the essentials of a Sacrament, the visible sign, the anointing with holy oil; the inward grace—and if he be in sins they shall be forgiven, the divine institution,—God alone could have authorized the Apostle to declare that Christ had ordained this Sacrament. Also, mention is frequently made of this Sacrament by the Fathers of the primitive ages. The words of St. John Chrysostom would alone suffice to make us understand that this doctrine has been held in the Church from the very beginning. "Not only," says the Saint, "when they give us spiritual life, but even after our regeneration, can priests forgive sins, for the Apostle says, 'If any man be sick among you, let him bring in the priests of the Church.'" Pope Innocent, who lived in the beginning of the fifth century, in a letter to a Bishop who had made inquiry about the manner of anointing the sick, refers to this Sacrament in these terms: "Extreme Unction," says

the Pontiff, "should be administered to all the faithful who are in danger of death from illness, public sinners alone excepted, for how could those who were denied other Sacraments be deemed worthy of this." According, therefore, to this learned Pontiff, Extreme Unction being one of the seven Sacraments, should not be administered to public sinners, to men unworthy of it.

The matter of this Sacrament is oil of olives, blessed by the Bishop on Holy Thursday. A priest, however, may be authorized by the Holy Father to bless the holy oil used in the administration of this Sacrament. Priests of the Greek Church bless it themselves, and this custom has been sanctioned by Rome. The form consists in the words the priest uses when he anoints the organs of the principal senses. These are the words: "Through this holy unction, and through His most tender mercy, may the Lord pardon thee whatever sins thou hast committed by seeing, by hearing, by smelling, by speech, by touch, by walking."

"The effects of the sacrament of Extreme Unction," says the Catechism, "are to comfort and strengthen the soul, to remit sin, and even restore health when God sees it to be expedient." This Sacrament increases the grace of God in the soul, and entitles the sick person to actual graces that will enable him to overcome the fearful temptations to which he is exposed. At that dreadful hour the devil makes a final effort to secure the eternal perdition of the dying

man, so that he may, unless aided by special graces, consent to his suggestions, and die in sin. This Sacrament is a source of great comfort to the dying. It fills the sick person with heavenly consolation, and inspires him with hope and confidence in God. To it he is indebted for great happiness and peace of mind at the hour of death, a peace unknown to heretics and sinners. It even sometimes gives the first grace and saves a dying man. The sick person, for instance, who has made a bad confession, without being conscious of having done so, his contrition or confession having been defective, receives this Sacrament with good dispositions, and is immediately reconciled with God. However, Extreme Unction being a Sacrament of the living, should be received in a state of grace, and the sick person, before being anointed, should confess his sins, and obtain absolution from the minister of God. This Sacrament remits venial sin, and also the temporal punishment due to sin, and restores us to health should God deem it expedient for us. Those who are sick should not, therefore, wait until the last moment, but should send for the priest and receive Extreme Unction as soon as they have fallen dangerously ill. For this Sacrament restores health by aiding the natural powers of the body, as theologians tell us, and should be administered before these powers are so exhausted as to leave no hopes of recovery, unless it be through a miracle on the part of God. Further, if this Sacrament is administered in time, the sick person will be better disposed to

receive the grace of the last unction, and to avail himself fully of this great blessing of the new ordinance, a blessing that will enable him to die at peace with his God. Extreme Unction should be received only once in the same illness, but should the sick person recover, and fall ill again, it may be administered a second time. Only adult members of the Church who are dangerously ill can be anointed. Those, for instance, who are about to die in battle or elsewhere cannot receive this Sacrament. The sick person should be in a state of grace, and animated with confidence in God and true sorrow for his sins. He need not, however, have perfect contrition, attrition being sufficient to enable him to receive worthily this Sacrament and its sacramental graces. Bishops and priests are the ministers of Extreme Unction. The priest should be sent for the very moment a person has fallen dangerously ill. It is also advisable to have ready at hand everything the priest may require for the administration of the Sacrament. A table being covered with a clean cloth, two candlesticks are placed upon it, and a bottle full of holy water, which is required in order to sprinkle the room and the sick person. The priest requires, likewise, a little cotton-wool to rub the organs of the different senses that have been anointed, and a basin of clean water for washing his hands after administering the Sacrament. The moment the priest enters the house he takes the holy water and sprinkles the sick person, whom he anoints,

pronouncing these words: "Through this Holy Unction, and through His most tender mercy, may God forgive thee whatever sins thou hast committed by seeing," etc. He then exhorts the sick person to be resigned to the will of God, to bear patiently his sufferings, and to offer them up in union with those of his Crucified Lord. Should the sick person be dying, the priest grants him the Papal blessing and a plenary Indulgence of all his sins, and recommends his soul to the Almighty in the following words: "Let the splendid company of angels meet thee, let the court of the Apostles receive thee, let the triumphal army of the glorious martyrs conduct thee, let the crowds of joyful confessors encompass thee, let the choir of blessed virgins go before thee, and let a happy rest be thy portion in the company of the patriarchs. Let Jesus Christ appear to thee with a mild and cheerful countenance, and give thee place among those who are to be in His presence for ever." The priest remains, saying this and other prayers, until the dying man has breathed his soul into the hands of his Maker, and received the reward that God has in store for all those who fight the good fight and persevere until the end.

AMEN.

LXV.

ON HOLY ORDER.

"For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sin."—HEB. v. 1.

HOLY Order, says the Catechism, is a Sacrament by which bishops, priests, and other ministers of the Church are ordained, and receive power and grace to perform their sacred duties. That Holy Order is a Sacrament is an article of faith that no Catholic can deny. "If anyone," says the Council of Trent, "shall maintain that Holy Order is not truly and really a Sacrament instituted by Christ, but a human fiction, invented by men totally ignorant of ecclesiastical things, or consists in a mere ceremony by which men are chosen to preach and administer the Sacraments, let him be anathema." "Neglect not," says St. Paul in his Epistle to Timothy, "the grace that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with imposition of the hands of the priesthood" (1 Tim. iv. 14). In these words the Apostle exhorts Timothy to remain faithful to his vocation, and not to forget the great favour that God had bestowed upon him in calling him to the priesthood. Holy Order must, therefore,

be a Sacrament, the grace of God being given by the imposition of hands, by means of an external sign, to which God alone could have attached the power of giving grace—of sanctifying the souls of men. As in Baptism grace is communicated the moment the priest pours water on the child's head, so in the Sacrament of Order when the Bishop lays his hands upon those who have been called to the priesthood, pronouncing the words ordained by Christ, they receive sanctifying and sacramental grace, the power to forgive sins, to offer the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and to perform other sacred duties. Furthermore, the priestly character is immediately impressed upon them either for their honour or shame and confusion. They receive a power that was not given to the angels of heaven, a power similar to that that Christ as man hath received from His heavenly Father. "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you. When He had said this, He breathed on them, and He said to them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (St. John xx. 21-23). And again, "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and, behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (St. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20).

Priests should perform their sacred duties without fear or human respect, and should be ready to die rather than sacrifice one iota of the doctrine that

Christ hath sent them to announce, never ceasing both by word and example to animate their people to penance and works of mercy, so that they may persevere until the end in the friendship of God; fighting the good fight, doing battle night and day for their heavenly Master.

There are seven Orders in the Church, three holy, and four minor Orders. The holy Orders are the priesthood, the deaconship, and the sub-deaconship; the minor are those of acolyte, exorcist, reader, and doorkeeper. These four Orders, together with the sub-deaconship, are not Sacraments, having been most probably instituted by the Church. Besides these there is the tonsure, which is a ceremony by which Christians are set apart for the services of God and enrolled among the clergy. The porter should open the church and see that the doors are closed and quite safe. He should also ring the bell and call the people to Mass. This function is generally performed at present by members of the laity, there being no clerics at hand to discharge it. The reader can read in public the lessons and certain prayers. He should also give catechetical instruction to children. The duty of exorcists consists in exorcising those who are possessed by the devil and wicked spirits. At present this is left to bishops and priests. The acolyte attends at Mass, lights the candles, and prepares the wine and water for the Holy Sacrifice. The sub-deacon waits upon the deacon, pours the wine and water into the chalice, and sings the Epistle at High Mass. The deacon waits upon the priest at Mass, sings the Gospel, preaches, and administers the

Sacrament of Baptism on certain occasions. We read in the Acts of the Apostles an account of the institution of this Order. The Apostles being anxious to devote themselves entirely to the salvation of souls, appointed seven men to look after the temporal wants of the people. "And in those days, the number of the disciples increasing, there arose a murmuring of the Greeks against the Hebrews, for that their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve, calling together the multitude of the disciples, said: It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word. And the saying was liked by all the multitude, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch; these they set before the Apostles. And they, praying, imposed hands upon them" (Acts vi. 1-6). Stephen was the most renowned of the seven deacons. Scripture says that he was full of faith, and did great wonders among the people. He was brought before the Council, accused of blasphemy, of preaching a new doctrine, that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy the temple, the religion that Moses had established, the customs of their forefathers. The man of God defended himself

most eloquently, and proved that Jesus, Whom he preached, had been predicted by the Prophets and by Moses himself, and accused his enemies of having murdered the Just One and the Prophets who had announced Him. Infuriated at these words, they seized the man of God, cast him out of the city, and put him to death. Stephen's last words were, in imitation of his Divine Master, a prayer offered up on behalf of his persecutors. "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looking up steadfastly to heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And he said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. And they, crying out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and with one accord ran violently upon him, and casting him forth without the city, they stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man whose name was Saul; and they stoned Stephen invoking and saying: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And falling on his knees, he cried with a loud voice: Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep" (Acts vii. 55-59). It is of faith that the priesthood was established by Christ. It was established to perform the most sacred duties, to remit sin, and to offer the holy Sacrifice of the Mass. After having instituted this most Holy Sacrifice at His last supper, Christ addressed His Apostles in these words: "Do this for a commemoration of Me" (St. Luke xxii. 19), thereby bestowing upon them and

their successors, the bishops and priests of the Church, the dignity of the priesthood; the power of offering up the sacrifice of the new law—namely, His Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, under the appearances of bread and wine. This power was communicated only to the Apostles and their successors, the bishops and priests of the Church of God, for to them alone were these words addressed: "Do this for a commemoration of Me" (St. Luke xxii. 19). Besides, Christ having instituted the Holy Mass, it was but natural that He should establish a priesthood that should offer this Sacrifice until the end of time. When the Lord ordered Moses to have sacrifices offered in His name, He appointed Aaron and his descendants to be priests of His sanctuary, and authorized them, and them alone, to offer sacrifices and fulfil the functions of the priesthood. And the Apostle tells us that priests are chosen for this purpose—to offer a sacrifice to God. "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in the things that appertain to God, that he may offer up gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Heb. v. 1). Therefore a sacrifice implies a priesthood, the two terms being correlative. The matter and form of the minor orders and the sub-deaconship consist in the *tradition* of the instruments and in the words by which this *tradition* is accompanied. The diaconate and the priesthood are conferred by the laying on of the hands of the Bishop, the form being the words that are pronounced by the minister when the imposition of

hands takes place. The episcopate is the plenitude of the priesthood, and confers upon those who receive it the power to administer all the Sacraments and the grace to govern the Church.

The Bishop is the minister of this Sacrament. Those who are to be ordained must have been baptized and confirmed; they must have a divine call, be full of the Holy Ghost, well versed in spiritual matters, and must receive the Sacrament in a state of grace. Orders conferred by heretics are not necessarily invalid. Those, however, of the Anglican Church are of no efficacy whatever. Parker, who ordained the first pastors of the Protestant Church, had no Orders, and could not, consequently, communicate to others what he did not possess himself. Also, the form he used was defective, being by no means expressive of the effects of the Sacrament. It was that of King Edward VI., or, rather, the one invented by his Ministers. The Sacrament receiving all its efficacy from Christ, the minister must use the form ordained by Him, and not that invented by men. Besides, as Holy Church does not acknowledge such Orders—for she ordains all Anglican ministers who desire after their conversion to be raised to the priesthood—we may conclude that there is not the slightest doubt about their invalidity.*

To conclude, beloved brethren, let me impress upon you the necessity of having the greatest respect

* Since this sermon was written, Rome has decided the matter, and declared the Orders of the Anglican Church to be invalid.—"Roma locuta est."

possible for your priests. Obey them in all things: consult them in your trials and tribulations, and never cease to pray for them. To them, after God, we are indebted for that faith with which we are animated, and which is dearer to us than life itself. In our infancy they received us into the Church and enrolled us in the sacred army of the Lord, and at our last moments they will be found at our bedside, comforting us in our death struggle against the adversaries of our immortal souls. Are we wearied with trials and tribulations? let us approach them, and they will pour into our afflicted souls the balm of heavenly consolation. They are ever ready to receive us, to give us advice, and to protect us against the innumerable dangers by which we are surrounded. Let us, therefore, love our priests, assist them in their efforts to secure the salvation of sinners, and never tolerate on the part of their enemies—and holy priests are sure to have enemies—the slightest word reflecting upon their characters. In olden days it was customary in England for all the members of a Christian family to prostrate themselves on the ground the moment a priest entered their houses, and to ask his blessing. Let us imitate the example of our forefathers. Let us never allow an opportunity to pass without imploring from the ministers of God a blessing upon ourselves and our families, and God, who loves His priests as the apple of His eye, will not turn a deaf ear to the prayers of a faithful priest offered up on behalf of a faithful and loving people. AMEN.

LXVI.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY.

"Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam, and when he was fast asleep He took one of his ribs and filled up flesh for it, and the Lord God built the rib which he took from Adam into a woman, and brought her to Adam. And Adam said, This now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man. Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh."—GEN. ii. 21-24.

WE read, beloved brethren, in St. John, that Jesus being invited to a marriage in the land of Galilee, went, accompanied by His mother and disciples. He honoured on that occasion Simon the Canaanite and his friends with His divine presence, in order to show the great respect with which He was animated towards the marriage contract. The little wine these poor people had for their guests being exhausted, our Lord provided them with some in a most wonderful manner. He ordered six waterpots to be filled with water, and at the prayer of His dear mother, worked His first miracle in public, changing the water into the most delicious wine. Some writers maintain that on that occasion Jesus raised the contract of marriage to the dignity of a Sacrament. However, His presence at

the marriage feast and the miracle He performed to gratify his friends, are a manifest proof of the great esteem He had for this contract. Is it not, therefore, fitting that we Christians should understand the nature of the Sacrament of Matrimony, and conceive a great idea of its importance as a heavenly institution, as a means that God has bestowed upon the world for the welfare of society and the sanctification of men?

Matrimony, says the Catechism, is a Sacrament which sanctifies the contract of a Christian marriage and gives a special grace to those who receive it worthily. It enables them to bear the difficulties of their state, to love and be faithful to one another, and to bring up their children in the fear of God. The Church of God has always maintained this doctrine, and the Fathers are unanimous in teaching it. This is also the teaching of the Greek Church, and of all heretical Churches of the East. They believe that Matrimony is a Sacrament, and that no power on earth can dissolve the bond of marriage. In his Epistle to the Ephesians St. Paul alludes to this subject, explains the duties of husbands and wives towards one another, and finishes by declaring that marriage is a great Sacrament in Christ and His Church. "Let women," says the Apostle, "be subject to their husbands as to the Lord" (Eph. v. 22). He exhorts wives to obey their husbands as they would Jesus Christ Himself, Whom they represent. "Because the husband is the head of the wife, as

Christ is the head of the Church. He is the Saviour of his body. Therefore, as the Church is subject to Christ, so also let the wives be to their husbands in all things. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life" (Eph. v. 23-26). After inculcating the necessity of obedience on the part of wives towards their husbands, the Apostle impresses upon husbands the necessity of loving their wives. He exhorts them to love their wives as Christ loved the Church. Also, as Christ sanctified His Church, so husbands should be unto their wives a source of sanctification. They should correct them, put up with their defects and imperfections, and inspire them with a love of God and a sincere desire of saving their immortal souls. In one word, they should sanctify them both by word and example, as Christ sanctified His Church, and died for it, "that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. v. 27). The Apostle gives another reason why husbands should love their wives—namely, because they are one flesh. As a man loves his body and provides for its wants, so a husband should support his wife and provide for all her wants, for she is his own flesh and blood, they both being two in one flesh. "For no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, as also Christ doth the Church" (Eph. v. 29). As

the Lord nourishes His Church, communicating incessantly to all her members His heavenly grace, which is the sap of life, so husbands should love their wives, provide for them, and assist them in all their wants. "For this cause," says the Apostle, "shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh. This is a great Sacrament. But I speak in Christ and in the Church" (Eph v. 31, 32). The marriage contract is a great Sacrament, for it represents the union between Christ and His Church. It is a Sacrament of the new ordinance, which bestows upon those, who receive it worthily, graces that will enable them to perform their sacred duties, and to love one another with a love similar to that which Christ bore His Church. The bond of marriage, being the symbol of the union that exists between Christ and the Church, imposes upon married people the most important duties. They must love one another as Christ loves His Church. Further, matrimony must provide men and women with the means of fulfilling these duties; it must bestow upon them sanctifying grace and actual graces in abundance; it must be a Sacrament.

It is of faith, beloved brethren, that the marriage bond can never be dissolved. When the Jews asked our Divine Lord whether it was lawful for a man to put away his wife for any cause, He told them that it was not. "Have ye not read that He who made man from the beginning made them male and female, and He said, For this cause shall a man leave father and

mother and shall cleave to his wife; and they two shall be in one flesh. Therefore now they are not two, but one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. They say to Him: Why, then, did Moses command to give a bill of divorce, and to put away? He saith to them, Because Moses by reason of the hardness of your heart permitted you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not so" (St. Matt. xix. 4-8). It follows, therefore, beloved brethren, from these words, that the bond of marriage is indissoluble. Married people may live separately for certain reasons, but they cannot get married again whilst one of the parties is living. That the words of our Lord should bear this interpretation is evident from the language used by the Apostle in reference to this Sacrament. "But to them that are married," says the Apostle, "not I, but the Lord commandeth that the wife depart not from her husband. And if she depart, that she remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband, and let not the husband put away his wife" (1 Cor. vii. 10, 11). The Apostle teaches the same doctrine in his Epistle to the Romans. "For the woman," says the Apostle, "that hath an husband, whilst her husband liveth is bound to the law. But if her husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. Therefore, whilst her husband liveth, she shall be called an adulteress if she be with another man; but if her husband be dead, she is delivered from that law of her husband, so that she is not an adulteress

if she be with another man" (Rom vii. 2, 3). The Apostle declares that a woman can never get married again whilst her husband is alive, and that if she does, she is guilty of adultery; and the same applies to the husband, for the marriage bond reaches both parties, and so unites them that they are, in the words of Christ, one flesh, and consequently inseparable. Besides, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, the Apostle insists upon married people loving one another, reminding them that their union is a symbol of the union that exists between Christ and His Church, and as this is indissoluble, so must be the bond that unites a man with his wife. Our Lord Himself repeats this doctrine, on another occasion, in terms that cannot be misunderstood. The words He used suffer no exception whatever either on behalf of husband or wife. "Everyone that putteth away his wife, and marrieth another," says our Lord, "committeth adultery, and he that marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery" (St. Luke xvi. 18). Here there is no exception whatsoever. Both man and wife are equally bound by the law of God, neither can one or the other get married until death hath severed the bond by which they were united.

In the beginning God took one of Adam's ribs and made it into a woman, thereby indicating that the wife, being of the same flesh and blood as the husband, should never be separated from him. "Then the Lord God cast a deep sleep upon Adam,

and when he was fast asleep He took one of his ribs and filled up flesh for it. And the Lord God built the rib which he took from Adam into a woman, and brought her to Adam. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man. Wherefore a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall be two in one flesh" (Gen. ii. 21-24). No power on earth can, therefore, dissolve the bond of marriage. To do so would be a grievous sin against God and against Nature itself. As the hand cannot be cut off from the body, so the wife cannot be separated from her husband. Not only would it be against nature to separate a man from his wife, as it would be unnatural to deprive him of a hand or an arm, but it would be also against the will of God, who from the beginning ordered man to cleave to his wife, for they were one flesh, and united by a bond that should never be dissolved.

This, beloved brethren, is the interpretation that the Fathers put upon these passages of Scripture that I have quoted above. They are unanimous in teaching the indissolubility of the Sacrament of Matrimony. Let St. Augustine speak for the Doctors of the primitive ages. These are his words: "Who are we, then, that we should say one is guilty of adultery who puts away his wife and marries another, and another who does the same is not guilty of adultery? For, seeing the Gospel says everyone commits adultery

who does this, and, consequently, all who do it, that is, who, putting away their wives, marry another, are guilty of adultery. Without doubt both are included; both he who for another cause besides fornication puts away his wife, and he who puts her away for the cause of fornication." St. Augustine explains St. Matthew, and shows that our Lord's words cannot imply any exception whatever, and that fornication can be no excuse for those men who break the marriage bond and get married again. Besides, as I remarked above, the interpretation that should be put upon the words of St. Matthew is manifest from other passages, which are as clear as possible on the subject. I will conclude, beloved brethren, by quoting a decree of the Council of Trent, by which the Council condemns all those who presume to call in question the doctrine that I have announced. "If any one," says the Council of Trent, "shall say that the Church is mistaken in having taught and in teaching according to the Evangelical and Apostolical doctrine that the bond of marriage cannot be dissolved by the adultery of either of the parties, and that both, or even the innocent party, who gives no cause to the adultery, cannot contract another marriage whilst the other party is alive, but that he is guilty of adultery who, putting away the adulteress, marries another, as is also she who, leaving the adulterer, marries another, let him be anathema."

AMEN.

LXVII.

ON THE IMPEDIMENTS OF MATRIMONY.

"Thou shalt take the virgin with the fear of the Lord, moved rather for love of children than for lust, that in the seed of Abraham thou mayest obtain a blessing in children."—TOBIAS vi. 22.

LAST Sunday, beloved brethren, I proved that marriage was a Sacrament, and, further, that the bond of matrimony can never be dissolved. Christ Himself raised the marriage contract to the dignity of a Sacrament, and declared that it was never lawful for a man to put away his wife and force asunder what God had joined together. The welfare of society demands the indissolubility of marriage, divorce, as we all know from experience, being the source of the greatest evils. Can we conceive the wretchedness of those children whose parents have been separated? Who will provide for them? Who will give them a Christian education? Who will receive those unfortunate beings whom an unnatural parent has deserted? Once admit the solubility of the marriage bond, and it will be impossible to curb the evil propensities of vicious men, who, being swayed by the most violent passions, will not scruple

to gratify them, and to have recourse to the most violent means in order to remove whatever obstacle may stand in their way. They will not hesitate to bring false charges against their wives, and, by means of perjured witnesses, blacken the character and destroy the reputation of the most innocent of women. We all remember the history of Henry VIII. The good king did not scruple in the least to get rid of his wives as soon as he got tired of them. Men equally vicious are to be found at the present day who, if they only have an opportunity of gratifying their passions, will do so, no matter what shame and dishonour their conduct may bring upon themselves and their families. It was, therefore, necessary for the welfare of society that Christ should restore matrimony to its primitive state, and forbid its bonds to be severed under any pretext whatever. To-day I will continue to say a few words about the Sacrament of Matrimony, the principal impediments that render the Sacrament null and void, the duties it imposes upon married people, the ends for which the marriage contract was instituted, and the dispositions with which it should be received.

The principal impediments are consanguinity, affinity, and spiritual relationship. By consanguinity we mean the relationship that exists between those who descend from the same stock, and this impediment extends to all relations in the direct line, and to first, second, and third cousins, to relations in the lateral line to the fourth degree inclusive. Holy

Church has forbidden these marriages for several reasons. Cousins, being generally together on the most familiar terms, would be liable to forget their duties were it lawful for them to intermarry. Such marriages are condemned by the laws of most countries, and, I believe, also by the medical profession. Affinity is an impediment that prevents marriage between the husband and his wife's relations and *vice versâ*. In case of matrimony it is as extensive as consanguinity itself, and includes all the wife's relations in the direct, and in the lateral line those of the fourth degree. In case of illicit connection this impediment extends only to relatives of the second degree. Spiritual relationship is an impediment that exists between sponsors and their godchildren and their parents. Those who are in Holy Orders, or who have made a solemn vow of chastity in a religious institution, being consecrated to the service of God, are also prevented from getting married. I may add that adultery committed by one of the parties, the other being still alive, with a mutual promise of marriage with the accomplice, is an impediment to subsequent marriage with that person; and if the adultery be accompanied with murder, or one of the parties murdered without the sin of adultery being committed, but with a view of marriage with a third party, who is conscious of the fact, no marriage can take place between the guilty parties. There are other impediments, but I think that I have mentioned the principal ones; and, after

referring briefly to the prohibitive impediments, I will proceed to consider the duties that are imposed upon married people. The prohibitive impediments do not annul the Sacrament of Matrimony, but only render it unlawful, so that those who contract marriage with these impediments would sin, but would be validly married. Holy Church does not sanction marriage between Catholics and heretics; she also forbids the contract of marriage from being solemnized in Advent or Lent. A simple vow of chastity, of entering a religious institution, or of taking Holy Orders, is also a prohibitive impediment. Also espousals prevent one from contracting marriage with another, and would be a diriment impediment in case the person you desired to marry were connected in the first degree to the one to whom you were formally betrothed. The Holy Father alone, beloved brethren, can dispense with these impediments that we call diriment, because, unless dispensed with, they invalidate the marriage contract, and he does not do so unless there be grave reasons.

Married people should be faithful to one another, and should bring up their children in the fear and love of God: and these duties the grace of God alone will enable them to fulfil. A young man who intends to get married should therefore have recourse to God by prayer and ask the Almighty to enlighten him on the choice that he is about to make. He should also consult his parents, and, as a rule, follow their advice. It would be most imprudent to disobey them, in a

thing of such vital importance. They are interested in his welfare, and entitled to know that his choice will not in the least prove injurious to themselves or their families. It is their bounden duty to direct their children on this important matter, and the Almighty will not bless marriages that have been contracted against the express will of a wise and prudent parent. A young man who means to marry should also consult his priest; approach frequently the Tribunal of Penance and the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist. It is especially at the holy altar, that we receive those graces that shed a vivid light over the path that we intend following in this mortal pilgrimage. But what intention should animate him in the choice he makes? A young man should choose a virtuous spouse, one that will console him in his trials and make him happy and contented. "Increase and multiply" (Gen. viii. 17), such were the words in which God addressed our first parents when He told them to subdue and replenish the earth. The begetting of children being, therefore, the principal end of matrimony, a young man should seek a spouse that will make him the father of children, and assist him in the education of the little ones with whom God may bless him. "Thy wife as a fruitful vine on the sides of thy house," says the royal Psalmist, "thy children as olive plants round about thy table" (Ps. cxxvii. 3). She should educate these little ones, inspire them with the love of God, and breathe into their immortal souls that spirit that

the machinations of a wicked world shall never subdue. We can, therefore, beloved brethren, easily understand why Holy Church should have forbidden mixed marriages. For how can a Protestant mother fulfil these duties? How can she instil into the minds of tender children love and respect for a religion that she never professed? Mixed marriages are, indeed, most fatal to the spiritual welfare of children and the happiness of man and wife. If the husband be a Protestant, he is frequently indifferent in matters of religion, and very little interested in the religious training of his children. He scruples not occasionally to use bad language, and to pass remarks that are most offensive to the Catholic Church. He sometimes finishes by stifling in the breasts of his offspring all religious sentiments and respect for everything that is sacred and dear to a true child of the Church. In such a case there can be no happiness, no Christian charity, but perpetual enmity, strife, and dissension, that are a source of scandal to the unfortunate children and most fatal to their temporal and spiritual welfare. This state of things becomes not unfrequently so unbearable, that parents are obliged to separate. Besides, these marriages are most dangerous to the Catholic party. It often happens that a poor woman must apostatize in order to please her husband, and allow her children to be perverted and brought up in a false religion. It was on this account that God forbade His people to contract marriage with heathen nations; and we

knowt hat those who heeded not the divine precept, and contracted alliances with the Canaanites and other peoples, fell away from the Lord and adored the gods of the Gentiles. "Neither shalt thou make marriage with them," as we read in the Book of Deuteronomy; "thou shalt not give thy daughter to his son, nor take his daughter for thy son, for she will turn away thy son from following Me, that he may rather serve strange gods; and the wrath of the Lord will be kindled, and will quickly destroy thee" (Deut. vii. 3, 4). These words should strike terror into the hearts of all Catholics, and inspire them with horror at the thought of contracting marriage with heretics in violation of the laws of God and Holy Church. Such marriages are, however, sometimes tolerated, but there must be weighty reasons, and both parties must solemnly promise to bring up their children in the Catholic Church, the Catholic party, the husband, for instance, being bound to do his utmost to convert his wife, and *vice versâ*, the wife promising to leave no stone unturned to bring her husband into the Church. Unfortunately, it often happens that these conditions are put aside, and the most solemn promises broken and cast to the winds. I would, therefore, beloved brethren, exhort you to avoid such marriages; and should by ill luck your choice fall upon a Protestant, endeavour to convert her to the true Church, and you will thereby protect yourself and your children from sorrow and great tribulation. Before marriage the banns should be

published three Sundays in church, so that your friends may be informed of your decision, and all impediments, should there be any, may be made known to the pastor of the mission. In England the marriages of Catholics are contracted in presence of the priest and the Government official, and in countries where the Council of Trent has been published no marriage is valid unless the parish priest be present. This is not the case here.

Matrimony, being a Sacrament of the living, should be received in a state of grace, so that both parties should approach the tribunal of penance a few days before the marriage ceremony comes off. They will thus dispose themselves to receive this holy ordinance, this Sacrament of the new law, and the abundant graces that will enable them to fulfil the duties of their state, to be faithful to one another, and to bring their children up in the fear and love of God. And one day they will be rewarded at the hands of God, for the young and valiant soldiers, whom they have enrolled under the banners of Christ.

AMEN.

LXVIII.

ON THE NECESSITY OF PENITENTIAL WORKS.

"Let us walk honestly, as in the day, not in rioting and in drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."—Rom. xiii. 13, 14.

The Epistle which is appointed to be read on the first Sunday of Advent is taken from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, in which the great Apostle of the Gentiles exhorts the Christian people of Rome to "cast off the works of darkness" (Rom. xiii. 12) and to walk honestly, to live good lives in a manner befitting true followers of Christ. As "our salvation is nearer" (Rom. xiii. 11), and the day is at hand when a Saviour shall be born unto men, Holy Church reminds her children of this advice of the great Apostle. In order that we may the better prepare ourselves by good works for the coming of our Lord, our Holy Mother imposes upon us certain fasts, which we are obliged to observe, unless we be exempt by infirmity, or excessive work, or some other sufficient reason. Being all obliged to mortify ourselves and to satisfy the divine justice inasmuch as it lies in our power, we should all most willingly embrace the opportunity that is offered

us of discharging a heavy debt and appeasing the anger of an irritated God.

It is by penitential works, that we expiate the sins of our past lives. After the remission of sin, the eternal punishment is usually exchanged for a temporal one, which we must suffer in this world or in the next. God never leaves sin unpunished; even in this life, He often visits the sinner with temporal calamities in punishment of his sins. Our Divine Lord, after having cured the sick man at the Pool of Bethsaida, told him to sin no more, lest something worse should happen unto him. David did penance for his sins. His knees became weak with fasting. The prophet lived as a solitary sparrow on the house-top, and clothed with sackcloth, he watered, night and day, his couch with his tears. The Lord forgave him, but in punishment, his child, the fruit of his sin, was like a tender flower cut off in his infancy. Punishment is not inflicted merely for our correction and as a warning to others. The malice of sin demands atonement on the part of sinful man. The angels were doomed to everlasting misery for one sin of pride, which they must expiate during all eternity. This punishment was inflicted upon them, not for their correction, for they were irretrievably lost, nor as a warning to the good angels, who were immediately confirmed in grace. They were thus treated, because the divine justice demanded that their sin should be expiated by eternal punishment. The doctrine of atonement is frequently inculcated in

Scripture. St. John the Baptist came to preach penance. "Ye brood of vipers," said he to the Jews, "who hath shewed you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of penance" (St. Matt. iii. 7, 8). St. Peter and St. Paul frequently taught the same doctrine. Our Divine Lord reproved the inhabitants of Bethsaida for not doing penance in sackcloth and ashes, as the people of Tyre and Sidon would have done had they witnessed His works (St. Luke x. 13). On another occasion He tells the Jews that the people of Ninive, who did penance at the voice of Jonas, shall rise in judgment and condemn them for not having listened to one greater than Jonas (St. Matt. xii. 41). Indignant at the wickedness of the Ninivites, the Lord sent His prophet to warn them of their approaching ruin. "Forty days," cried Jonas, "and Ninive shall be destroyed" (Jonas iii. 4). The voice of the prophet inspired the whole city with fear. The inhabitants, led by their king, fasted and prayed fervently, covering themselves and their children with sackcloth and ashes. Their lamentations and prayers so moved the Lord, that He repented of the evil that He had said that He would do unto them. This example alone is enough to make us understand how agreeable penitential works are in the eyes of God. In the Old Testament there are several others, and I will mention that of King Achab. This wicked king had established idolatry among his people, and had been guilty of the most atrocious deeds. The prophet Elias was sent by God

to announce the severe chastisement the Lord had in store for him. At the voice of the Prophet, Achab did penance. He prayed, he fasted, and covered himself with ashes and sackcloth. And the Lord was so pleased at the penance of the King of Israel, that he exclaimed: "Hast thou not seen Achab humbled before Me? Therefore because he hath humbled himself for My sake, I will not bring the evil in his days, but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house" (3 Kings xxi. 29). We might refer once more to the example of David, whose mortified life is being continually held up to the admiration of all Christians. The Apostles not only teach this doctrine, they inculcate it by their example. St. John the Baptist lived a most austere life: his food was locusts and honey, his raiment of camels' hair. Wine he never tasted, nor did he ever eat flesh meat. St. Paul tells the Corinthians that he chastised his body for fear that, having preached to others, he should become a castaway. Never did Peter cease to do penance for having betrayed his Divine Master. This doctrine has not been lost upon all true followers of our Divine Lord. The Church of God, faithful to her mission, has never omitted to impress the teaching of her Divine Founder upon all her children. From the beginning she established public penances, and thus encouraged all Christians to appease the anger of God by penitential works of the greatest rigidity. Her history is rich in examples of men and women who seem to have vied with the Apostles themselves in the

austerity of their lives. But are not our sufferings and penitential works injurious to the Passion of our Divine Lord? It is through the Passion and Death of Christ that our works are meritorious and pleasing before God. All honour redounds, therefore, upon Christ, the Author of all our good works. Besides, did not Christ feel a bitter sorrow for our sins, did He not pray for our salvation? Are we, therefore, exempt from prayer and from exciting in ourselves sincere contrition for past sins? Certainly not; we must still pray for divine grace and regret the past. Our prayers and our regrets are in no way injurious to the prayers of our Divine Master and to the deep sorrow, which He felt for us, the night before His Passion in the Garden of Olives. If the doctrine that inculcates the necessity of penitential works rendered the Passion of our Lord useless, the teaching (and it is that of all Christians) of those who insist upon prayer and true sorrow for past sins would be open to objection on the same grounds. It is through the Passion of Christ, that our sins are forgiven, the eternal punishment being exchanged for a temporal one, which we must undergo in this life or the next. We must, in the words of the Apostle, fulfil in ourselves what is wanting to the sufferings of Christ. "If any man," says Jesus, "will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me" (St. Matt. xvi. 24). It is through Calvary that we shall reach Mount Tabor, for if we suffer with Christ we shall be glorified with Him.

Let us, therefore, embrace our cross with Christian joy; let us perform penitential works inasmuch as we possibly can; let us mortify ourselves by bearing cheerfully all the little crosses that God may send us. Thus we shall appease the divine anger, and root out from our hearts all bad habits and all dispositions to offend our God. We shall atone for the past, and deserve at the hands of our Lord special graces for ourselves and for others. We shall not only secure our own salvation, but, through God's grace, that of innumerable souls who otherwise would have been dragged down to the bottomless pit of perdition.

AMEN.

LXIX.

ON THE PASSION OF OUR DIVINE LORD.

"Then Jesus came with them into a country place which is called Gethsemane. He began to grow sorrowful. Then He saith to them, My soul is sorrowful, even unto death."—St. Matt. xxvi. 36-38.

Jesus having suspended by a miracle the ineffable joy of the beatific vision, and left His soul a prey to the cruel agony that the thought of death must have caused Him, His soul began to grow sorrowful. What caused this deep sorrow was, to quote a spiritual writer, "First, the repulsive sight of the sins of men, which His Father had laid on Him because He had offered Himself as the Victim of Universal expiation. 'Posuit Dominus in eo iniquitates omnium nostrum'—'The Lord had laid on Him the iniquity of us all.' Secondly, the vivid and detailed representation of all the torments, all the insults, that He had to undergo. Finally, the terrible thought of the uselessness of His death to the vast number of men who would harden themselves in sin. Quæ utilitis in sanguine meo?"

"And going a little farther, He fell upon His face, praying and saying, My Father, if it be possible, let

this chalice pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (St. Matt. xxiv. 39). He prays God to spare Him the fearful sufferings He is about to undergo, being, however, perfectly resigned and willing to endure them if it be the will of His heavenly Father.

"Being in an agony . . . and His sweat became as drops of blood, trickling down upon the ground. And there appeared to Him an angel from heaven strengthening Him" (St. Luke xxii. 43, 44). Spiritual writers tell us that this sweat of blood was the effect of the struggle that took place between Nature and Will, Nature refusing to drink the bitter cup, and Will compelling Nature to yield to the decrees of Heaven.

"And leaving them, He went again and He prayed. . . . Then He cometh to His disciples, and saith to them, Sleep ye now, and take your rest. Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners. . . . As He yet spoke, behold Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs. . . . And forthwith coming to Jesus, he said, Hail, Rabbi, and he kissed Him. And Jesus said to him, Friend, whereto art thou come? Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" (St. Matt. xxvi. 44-49; St. Luke xxii. 48). Judas sold our Lord to the Jews for thirty pieces of silver. By a kiss he delivered his Master to the fury of His enemies. We are horrified at the conduct of this vile apostate, at his revolting hypocrisy, forgetting that each time we make an

unworthy Communion we deliver our dear Lord to the demons who have taken possession of our hearts.

"Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth, and said to them, Whom seek ye? They answered Him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith to them, I am He. As soon, therefore, as He said to them, I am He, they went backwards, and fell to the ground. If, therefore, you seek Me, let these go their way. Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. And the name of the servant was Malchus. But Jesus, having touched his ear, healed it. They then took Jesus and bound Him. Then the disciples, all leaving Him, fled" (St. John xviii. 4-12; St. Mark xiv. 50).

Shortly before His Passion, our Lord performed several miracles to show that He was taken prisoner and put to death because it was His own will, and to enable His followers to prove to their enemies and persecutors that the death of their dear Lord and Master was not the effect of weakness, but of the intense love He bore the human race. Notwithstanding the miracles our Lord performed on this occasion, the Jews persevered in their criminal intentions, and, seizing Him, they bound Him, and led Him on to Caiaphas, the high priest. Miracles do not convert men in whom the voice of reason has been stifled by violent passions. The moment His disciples saw their Master in the hands of His enemies they forsook

Him, having lost all confidence in Him—in His omnipotent power. "Such," says a spiritual writer, "was the fatal consequence of their presumption, and their neglect of gaining strength by prayer before the struggle, as our Divine Saviour expressly recommended them to do."

"And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, and Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas, where the scribes and ancients were assembled. The high priest, therefore, asked Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine. Jesus answered him, I have spoken openly to the world; ask them who have heard what I have spoken to them. And when He had said these things, one of the servants standing by gave Jesus a blow, saying, Answerest Thou the high priest so? And Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil; but if well, why strikest thou Me?" (St. John xviii. 13-23). In answer to the high priest who had questioned Him about His doctrine, Jesus appealed to the public, having nothing to fear from the severest examination possible of what He had said. Our Lord's conduct was in every respect irreproachable, and we feel indignant at the outrage offered to Him by the servant of the high priest who gave Him a blow in open court for having answered the high priest in this manner. Instead of taking revenge for this cruel insult, Jesus shows not the slightest resentment, answering the servant with the greatest meekness:

"If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil; but if well, why strikest thou Me?"

"And the chief priest and the whole council sought false witness against Jesus, that they might put Him to death, and they found none. And the high priest, rising up, said to Him, Answerest thou nothing to the things which these witness against Thee? But Jesus held His peace. And the high priest said to Him, I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us if Thou be Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus said to him, Thou hast said it" (St. Matt. xxvi. 59-64). The life of our Lord was so perfect that His enemies, although they brought false witnesses against Him, could find nothing in it that was worthy of reproach. He remained silent under the false accusations that were brought against Him, knowing well that time would vindicate His character before God and man. It was only when the high priest asked Him in the name of the living God to tell them whether He was the Son of God, the Messiah, that He openly confessed that He was, though He knew that His confession would cost Him His life.

"Then the high priest rent his garments, saying, He hath blasphemed, what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy, what think you? But they, answering, said, He is guilty of death" (St. Matt. xxvi. 65, 66).

Our Lord was therefore sentenced to death as a blasphemer for having arrogated to Himself the

attributes of the Deity. Pretending to be overcome with grief, the high priest rent his garments, saying, He hath blasphemed, what further need have we of witnesses? And the other judges, being blinded with fury and passion, and embittered against Jesus, who had compared them to whitened sepulchres, beautiful outside, but inside full of dead men's bones, ratified the sentence, and pronounced Him guilty of death. "In this world," says a pious author, "the innocent are often calumniated and oppressed by the crafty; and it is permitted by God for wise and merciful reasons. And so, in this instance, Caiaphas was the instrument by which God, made man, should complete the sacrifice of His life in reparation to His Father for the sins of mankind. This wicked sentence of death opened to us all the gates of eternal life." "Then did they spit in His face, and buffeted Him; others struck His face with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophesy unto us, O Christ, Who is he that struck Thee?" (St. Matt. xxvi. 67, 68). After having been condemned to death as a blasphemer, the servants of the high priest seized our Lord and dragged Him into prison, where He passed the night surrounded by the most violent of men, who treated Him with derision and made brutal sport of Him. They seated Him on a block of wood, His hands being bound and His eyes blindfolded, and struck Him on the face, crying out, "Prophesy, Who is he that struck Thee?" They even spat in His face, so that the words of the prophet Isaias were fulfilled: "I have not turned

away My face from them that spat upon Me." With the example of our Lord before us, can we complain if we receive not from men that consideration that we imagine ourselves entitled to?

"What!" says St. Bernard, "shall my Master and my King be insulted and spat upon by His vilest subjects, and shall I be honoured, who have deserved for my sins to be cast with the refuse of the human race to the bottom of hell? No, never! Let me rather be forgotten and despised by all men in this world, that I may obtain mercy in eternity."

"Now when Peter was in the court below, there cometh one of the maid-servants of the high priest. And when she had seen Peter warming himself, looking on him she saith: Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. But he denied before them all, saying: Woman, I know Him not. And again he denied with an oath that I know not the man. And after the space, as it were, of one hour, one of the servants of the high priest saith to him, Did I not see thee in the garden with Him? Surely thou also art one of them? But he began to curse and swear, saying, I know not this man of whom you speak. And the Lord, turning, looked at Peter. Peter remembered the words that Jesus said to him: Before the cock crow twice thou shalt thrice deny Me; and, going forth, he wept bitterly" (St. Mark xiv. 66-72).

Peter, who had followed our Lord into the court of the high priest, being reproached by the servants

with being a follower of Christ, swore that he knew Him not, confirming His oath with fearful imprecations. The Fathers give several reasons for the fearful fall of this chosen Apostle. He was, they tell us, too presumptuous, he neglected prayer, and exposed himself rashly to temptation. They also tell us why God allowed Peter to fall so low. It was, they say, in order that Peter and his successors might feel great compassion for the fallen; that the most virtuous men should not expose themselves rashly to temptation, but should work out their salvation in fear and trembling; finally, that, considering the weak foundation upon which the Church was built, we should believe it to be the work of God and not of men. But the Lord looked on Peter and converted him. One glance of Jesus was enough to pierce the heart of the Apostle, to convert him, and raise him from the sleep of death. "Sudden and wonderful," says a holy writer, "was the change which one look from Jesus wrought in the heart of the faithless disciple. In an instant the darkness that encompassed his soul disappeared. He saw clearly the greatness of his sin; he remembered all his Master's forewarnings at the Last Supper and in the Garden of Olives. And his heart was filled, not with despair, but with the deepest contrition. He was transformed into the model of a true penitent. Wonderful indeed is the work of grace! Silently it penetrates into the soul, enlightening and strengthening it, showing it the instability of creatures, the guilt and horror of sin,

filling it with deep and salutary contrition. It makes the sinner shed tears of mingled grief, love, and joy; it purifies the soul from all unruly affections, disengages it from the world, and draws it upwards to God."

"And when morning was come, all the chief priests and ancients of the people took counsel against Jesus, that they might put Him to death. And they brought Him bound, and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor" (St. Matt. xxvii. 1, 2).

The chief priests and ancients having assembled early in the morning and condemned Jesus to death, had Him bound and delivered up to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. It was His own people that delivered Jesus into the hands of the Gentiles, the very people upon whom He had conferred the most signal favours. We feel indignant at the conduct of the Jews, at their black ingratitude; but are we less blamable ourselves each time we approach the Blessed Sacrament in a state of sin, and, by a sacrilegious Communion, deliver our dear Lord into the company of the evil one? "Then Judas, who had betrayed Him, seeing that He was condemned, repenting himself, brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and ancients, saying, I have sinned in betraying innocent blood. But they said, What is that to us? look thou to that. And casting down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed, and went and hanged himself with an halter" (St. Matt. xxvii. 3-5).

Seeing that Jesus, whom He had betrayed into the hands of His enemies, was condemned to death, Judas was so horrified at the thought of his crime and black ingratitude that he took back the money, he had received from the chief priest as the price of his treachery, and went and hanged himself. Judas fell into the sin of despair. Had he, like Peter, repented, he would have obtained forgiveness. If we are so unfortunate as to fall into sin, let us follow the example of Peter, and throw ourselves at the feet of Jesus, Whose mercy is great indeed and as boundless as the ocean.

"Pilate therefore went out to them, and said, What accusation bring you against this man? They answered and said to him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up to you. Pilate therefore said to them, Take you him, and judge him according to your law. The Jews therefore said to him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death" (St. John xviii. 29-31).

It was the priests and ancients who instigated the people to accuse Jesus, Who had never injured anyone, Who had passed His life in doing good, in befriending the poor, the helpless and forlorn. They could have themselves pronounced sentence of death upon our Lord; but they wanted Him to be crucified, to suffer the most cruel and shameful death usually inflicted by the Romans, but seldom by the Jews. They therefore delivered Jesus to the Roman governor, hoping that He would be found guilty and condemned

to undergo the shameful death of the Cross. They accused Him of perverting the nation, of refusing to pay tribute, and of saying that He was Christ the King. These accusations were altogether false. Jesus had always inculcated obedience to the powers that be, and the necessity of rendering unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. And the kingdom that He was to establish was not earthly, but a spiritual one. "This frightful picture," says a holy writer, "is daily reproduced before our eyes. Our Lord and His holy faith are still hated, still calumniated, and often by those upon whom His best gifts have been poured—those whose rank and talents have raised them above their fellow-creatures, but who only use their superiority to mislead their inferiors, and stir them up against our Lord and His Church. We should not, however, have bitter feelings towards them, but rather pity them, for the longer their punishment is delayed, the greater it will be."

"Pilate therefore went into the hall again, and called Jesus and said to Him, Art thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered up to the Jews; but now my kingdom is not from hence. Pilate therefore said to Him, Art thou a King then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a King. For this was I born, and for this came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth

My voice. Pilate went out again to the Jews, and saith to them, I find no cause in Him" (St. John xviii. 33-38).

Our Lord told Pilate that His kingdom was not of this world. His kingdom was composed of all those who believed in Him, and who kept the commandments of His heavenly Father. The Church is His kingdom. By Baptism we become members of the Church, of this heavenly kingdom. Pilate, having satisfied himself that Jesus was free from guilt, and that His kingdom was not in opposition to the powers that be, pronounced Him innocent. "I find, said he, no cause in Him" (St. John xviii. 38). "And when He was accused by the chief priests and ancients, He answered nothing. Then Pilate saith to Him, Dost not Thou hear how great testimonies they allege against Thee? But He answered him never a word; so that the governor wondered exceedingly" (St. Matt. xxvii. 12-14). "But they were more earnest, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place" (St. Luke xxiii. 5). Our Lord answered not a word, for the holy life He had lived was a perfect defence against the false accusations that were brought against Him. Being determined to die for us, He would not say a single word to save His own life.

"And when he understood that He was of Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him away to Herod, who was also himself at Jerusalem. And Herod, seeing Jesus, was very glad; for he was desirous a long time to see

Him, because he had heard many things of Him, and He hoped to see some sign wrought by Him. And he questioned Him in many words; but He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood by, earnestly accusing Him. And Herod with his army set Him at nought, and mocked Him, putting on Him a white garment, and sent Him back to Pilate" (St. Luke xxiii. 7-11).

To gratify his curiosity, Herod, the murderer of St. John the Baptist, asked our Lord to work a miracle. This favour was not, however, granted, for God does not bestow His extraordinary graces upon proud and reckless men, but upon the humble of heart, who, emptied of self, seek in all things the greater glory of God.

"Let us contemplate Jesus," says a Catholic author, "the King of Glory, the Eternal Wisdom, standing before Pilate, insulted by the coarse and stupid mob; let us follow Him in spirit, wearing the fool's robe through the streets of Jerusalem, amidst the jeerings of the populace and the immense crowd of strangers which the Pascal Feast had brought into the city, and we shall see that the prophecy of Jeremiah was fulfilled to the very letter: 'I am made a derision to all My people.' When we contemplate Jesus Christ as the True Way, which leads us unto life, to serve Him willingly, to be ready, in imitation of Him and for His love, to be despised, insulted, reviled, and even looked upon as a fool, although we have done nothing to deserve this treatment—this is the foolishness of the

Cross. Many of God's servants have travelled by this road. Why should we not follow in their footsteps?"

"They therefore being gathered together, Pilate said, Whom will you that I release unto you, Barabbas, or Jesus, that is called Christ? But the chief priests and ancients persuaded the people that they should ask Barabbas, and make Jesus away" (St. Matt. xxvii. 17-20). "But the whole multitude cried out together, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas" (St. Luke xxiii. 18).

Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent. He sent Him to Herod, hoping that the king would set Him free. He now gives the people their choice between Jesus and a noted criminal. Pilate was animated with a good intention, with the desire of saving the Innocent, and never dreamt that the Jews would prefer Barabbas to Jesus: "Not this man, but Barabbas." What humiliation for our Lord to have been put on a level with a notorious criminal, and to have seen a murderer preferred to Himself! With the example of sweet Jesus before us, can we complain of the injustice and cruel treatment that we sometimes suffer at the hands of wicked men?

"Pilate saith to them, What shall I do, then, with Jesus, that is called Christ? They say all, Let Him be crucified. The governor said to them, Why? what evil hath He done? And he said to them a third time, I find no cause of death in Him. I will chastise Him, therefore, and let Him go" (St. Matt. xxvii. 22, 23; St. Luke xxiii. 22).

The efforts Pilate made to save Jesus only excited the fury of the Jews. Instigated against Him by the priests and ancients, they forgot all He had done for them—the innumerable miracles He had performed on their behalf. It was but yesterday that He cured the deaf and dumb, the paralytic, and raised the dead to life. All His good deeds are forgotten, and nothing will satisfy them but the blood of their Benefactor. However, to appease their anger and excite their compassion for Jesus, Pilate condemned Him to a cruel and shameful punishment—the scourging at the pillar. "The horror of this punishment," to quote the same author, "is beyond the power of words to describe; but in order to realize it as far as possible, imagine yourself undergoing it, imagine your clothes torn off, yourself covered with blood and bound to the pillar, while strong men, armed, some with whips, some with straps, some with cords and iron spikes, scourge you till their arms drop with fatigue, until your body is but one sore, your flesh torn, and the ground covered with your blood. Then, perhaps, you may form some idea of the suffering of that scourging which your Divine Saviour endured for you. Our Lord bore it from His heroic love for us: He gave up His body into the hands of the executioners, that He might expiate, in His innocent flesh, the shameful and countless sins with which men of all ages and conditions have degraded, and do daily degrade, their bodies—sins by which they dishonour and trample

under their feet the image of God, in whose likeness they were created."

"Then the soldiers of the governor taking Jesus into the hall, they gathered together unto Him the whole band, and stripping Him, they put a scarlet cloak about Him, and plaiting a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head, and a reed in His right hand. And bowing the knee before Him, they mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! And spitting on Him, they took the reed and struck His head" (St. Matt. xxvii. 27-30).

The cruel soldiers pressed the crown of thorns upon the head of our dear Lord with all their might, so that His suffering must have become intense, unbearable. They crowned Him as a fool, and bowing the knee before Him, they mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! Our Lord bore these insults with the greatest patience, fulfilling to the very letter the prophecy of Isaias: "I have not turned away My face from them that spat upon Me."

"Jesus, therefore, came forth bearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment, and Pilate said to them, Behold the man! When the chief priests and servants had seen Him, they cried out, saying, Crucify Him, crucify Him! Pilate saith to them, Take Him you, and crucify Him. The Jews answered him, We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God" (St. John xvii. 5-7).

Pilate had our Lord brought forth and presented to

the people, hoping that the sight of Jesus crowned with thorns and covered with blood would move them to have pity upon Him. Probably they would have relented had they not been urged on by the priests, whose implacable hatred nothing but blood could satisfy. They accused Him of blasphemy, of having made Himself the Son of God; but His real crime was that He had seen through their hypocrisy, and eclipsed them by the sanctity of His life. The priests never forgave His having compared them to whitened sepulchres.

"He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God. When Pilate, therefore, had heard this saying, he feared the more. And he entered into the hall again, and he said to Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer. Pilate therefore saith to Him, Speakest thou not to me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and I have power to release thee? Jesus answered, Thou shouldst not have any power against Me, unless it were given thee from above; therefore he that hath delivered Me to thee hath the greater sin" (St. John xix. 7-11).

Having had his suspicions aroused about the Divinity of our Lord, Pilate was anxious, before committing himself, to make further inquiries into the truth of the charge that the Jews had brought against Him, namely, that He had made Himself the Son of God. Our Lord did not satisfy the curiosity of this cowardly judge. He was unworthy of being

enlightened on the great truths of eternity. "And from henceforth Pilate sought to release Him. But the Jews cried out, saying, If thou release this Man, thou art not Cæsar's friend; for whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar" (St. John xix. 12). This last threat proved fatal to the sacred cause of justice. Frightened at the thought of losing the King's favour, Pilate yielded and delivered up Jesus to His enemies. We all execrate the pusillanimity of the Roman Governor, but do we not frequently imitate him, and, through fear of displeasing men, betray our God and the most sacred duties of our holy religion? "And (Pilate) saith to the Jews, Behold your King! Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no King but Cæsar. Then, therefore, he delivered Him to be crucified. And Pilate, taking water, washed his hands before the people, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just Man. Look you to it. And they took Jesus and led Him forth, and bearing His own cross, He went forth to that place which is called Calvary" (St. John xvi. 14-17). "St. Peter," says the holy author quoted above, "speaks of the perfect submission with which Jesus accepted His unjust sentence: 'He delivered Himself to him that judged Him unjustly'; that is, He looked on it as coming from God the Father, Who makes use of the malice of men to accomplish His designs. The design of God here was to make reparation to Him, and to redeem mankind by the death of His Divine Son. And it was

this that our Lord had ardently desired from the first moment of His Incarnation; judge, therefore, of the joy and eagerness with which He laid the heavy cross upon His shoulders."

"And after they had mocked Him, they took off the purple from Him, and put His own garments on Him, and they led Him out to crucify Him. . . . And they bring Him unto the place called Golgotha, which, being interpreted, is the place of Calvary; and with Him they crucify two thieves, the one on His right hand, and the other on His left" (St. Mark xv. 20-22).

Clothed in His own garments so that He might be recognised by all, they led Him out to a place called Golgotha, where He was crucified in the company of the wicked, of two notorious thieves. Fearing that our Lord, Who had fallen thrice beneath the cross from exhaustion and loss of blood, should die before He arrived at the place of execution, the Jews forced Simon the Cyrenian to help Him to carry His cross. Let us, in the company of Simon the Cyrenian, carry the cross of Christ. In the cross, says the Imitation, is salvation, in the cross is life, in the cross is the protection from enemies, in the cross is infusion of heavenly sweetness.

"And there followed Him a great multitude of people, and of women who bewailed and lamented Him. But Jesus, turning to them, said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over Me, but weep for yourselves and your children" (St. Luke xxiii. 27, 28).

According to tradition, our Blessed Lady must have

been among the women who followed our Lord on His way to Calvary. Can we conceive the intensity of her grief at the sight of her dear Son Whom she sees covered with blood and wounds, an object of execration to the vile rabble who hurried Him on to the place of execution. "God," says a pious author, "willed that our Blessed Lady should be thus afflicted, that she, above all the saints, might have the largest share in the Passion of her Son and the work of our redemption, and thus accumulate more merit and richer treasures of sanctity than all that have yet lived, or shall live. Do not be astonished, therefore, do not murmur, if God sends you much suffering and tribulation, but believe that He does so to increase your love and merit."

"And they came to a place that is called Golgotha, which is the place of Calvary. And they gave Him wine to drink, mingled with gall. And when He had tasted, He would not drink. And it was the third hour, and they did crucify Him" (St. Matt. xxvii. 33, 34; St. Mark xv. 25).

Having arrived at Calvary, our Lord was stripped of His garments and crucified. He was stretched upon the Cross and fastened to it by enormous nails. He remained hanging on the cross for three mortal hours, suffering a martyrdom, and dying by inches. "And with Him they crucify two thieves, the one on His right hand, and the other on His left, and the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, And with the wicked He was reputed" (St. Mark xv. 27, 28).

We feel horrified at the thought of our Divine Lord being condemned to die in the company of the vilest of men. Let us grieve and weep over His sufferings; let us prostrate ourselves before Him; let us adore Him, for by His Blood He has redeemed us. He has blotted out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, and opened unto us the gates of paradise.

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (St. Luke xxiii. 34). "And Pilate wrote a title also, and he put it upon the cross, and the writing was, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. And it was written in Hebrew, in Greek, and in Latin. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that He said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written" (St. John xix. 19-22). "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." This is the prayer that our dear Lord offers up to His heavenly Father on behalf of His executioners. He prays for His murderers; He asks His heavenly Father to forgive them. Let us follow the example of our Divine Lord, let us forgive those who have offended us, let us pray for them.

"And one of the robbers who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us. But the other, answering rebuked him, saying, neither dost thou fear God, seeing that thou art under the same condemnation. And we, indeed, justly, for we receive the due reward of our evil deeds;

but this Man hath done no evil. And he said to Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy kingdom. And Jesus said to him, I say to thee, This day thou shalt be with Me in paradise" (St. Luke xxiii. 39-43).

Of the two thieves who were crucified with our Lord, one remained a blasphemer until the end, and died in final impenitence; the other was converted, and died a happy death. A single prayer, "Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy kingdom," obtained for the penitent thief the grace of conversion, the forgiveness of all his sins, and the promise of life everlasting. His faith in our Divine Lord was great indeed: "For he sees Him hanging on the cross," says St. John Chrysostom, "and he invokes His protection as if He were in heaven, surrounded by hosts of angels."

"The soldiers, therefore, when they had crucified Him, took His garments (and they made four parts, to every soldier a part), and also His coat" (St. John xix. 23). "And they that passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads, and saying, If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. In like manner also, the chief priests, with the scribes and ancients" (St. Matt. xxvii. 39-41). "To-day," says a pious author, "they cry, Hosanna, they reverence and applaud Him; to-morrow it is, Crucify Him! and He is forgotten, disdained, and despised. Such is the history of earthly greatness; what folly, therefore, if in the exercise of any good work you seek for

notice, fame, or applause! In doing so, not only will you lose all merit in the sight of God, but you will lose likewise the esteem of men."

"Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus His Mother. When Jesus, therefore, had seen His Mother and the disciple standing, whom He loved, He saith to His Mother, Woman, behold thy son. After that, He saith to His disciple, Behold thy Mother" (St. John xix. 25-27). These words must have embittered the soul of Mary. "How painful," says St. Bernard, "for our Blessed Lady to receive St. John in the place of Jesus, a servant in the place of our Lord, a man instead of the Son of God! Must not these words have pierced Mary's heart with a sword of grief, when the very thought of them wounds the hardened hearts of men!" "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over the whole earth until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? That is, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (St. Matt. xxvii. 45, 46). "Afterwards, Jesus, knowing that all things were accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, I thirst" (St. John xix. 28).

The darkness that lasted three hours, and that was quite miraculous, produced no effect upon the unfeeling Jews; they still remained obstinate in their sins. "All the elements," says St. Gregory, "gave their testimony to their Creator's advent. His birth was announced by a star; the sea became firm beneath

His footsteps, the sun grew dark, the earth trembled, and the rocks were rent at His death, whilst those that were in tombs returned once more to earth. Yet still the Jews, harder than the very rocks, remained obstinate in their unbelief."

"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (St. Matt. xxvii. 46). It does not follow from this plaintive cry that our Lord was abandoned by God, or that He fell into despair. The very thought of such a thing would be pure blasphemy. They simply mean that our Lord was deprived of all sensible consolation and condemned to drink the bitter cup to the very dregs, His Divinity not having in the least diminished the bitterness of His Passion. "Afterwards Jesus, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, I thirst" (St. John xix. 18). Immediately a soldier took a sponge, and, filling it with vinegar, gave it Him to drink, and thus our Lord fulfilled in His person the prediction of the royal prophet: "In My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink" (Ps. lxviii. 22).

"Jesus, therefore, when He had taken the vinegar, said, It is consummated" (St. John xix. 30). All that I came down from heaven to accomplish I have fulfilled. I have done reparation to God for the sins of the world; I have restored man to his lost inheritance. It is consummated. I have glorified Thee on earth; I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do; I may now die in peace. *Consummatum est.*

"And Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit. And saying

this, and bowing His head, He gave up the ghost" (St. Luke xxiii. 46).

"He died," to quote again a holy author, "abandoned and calumniated; but His death is followed by an immediate testimony to both His innocence and His Divinity by the centurion at the foot of the Cross, exclaiming at the sight: 'Indeed, this was a just Man; indeed, this Man was the Son of God!' Jesus is dead! But He has overcome death, and opened to us the gates of everlasting life. He is dead, but from His Heart, pierced by the lance, flows the life-giving Sacrament of His Spouse, the Church, which is to bring forth till the end of time an innumerable multitude of children throughout the world. He is dead, His Body remains nailed to the Cross, but His soul enjoys the beatific vision, and has received the adoration of the inhabitants of Limbo. O Body and Soul of Jesus, that have suffered so much for me, what can I do in return? I adore and bless Thee, and, recalling the words of the Apostle, that Christ died for all, that they also who live may not live to themselves, but unto Him who died for them, I will endeavour, O my Jesus, to die more and more to myself, to the world, and to all that displeases Thee."

AMEN.

LXX.

ON OUR BLESSED LADY.

"I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel."—GENESIS iii. 15.

WE read, beloved brethren, in the seventh chapter of the Book of Esther that the Jews whom King Assuerus had condemned to death were saved through the intercession of Queen Esther. She appeared before the King and implored him not to allow her own people to perish. "What is thy petition, Esther, that it may be granted thee? said the King, and what would thou have done? Although thou ask the half of my kingdom, thou shalt have it. Then she answered: If I have found favour in thy sight, O King, and if it please thee, give me my life for which I ask, and my people for which I request. For we are given up, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. And would God we were sold for bondmen and bondwomen: the evil might be borne with, and I would have mourned in silence: but now we have an enemy whose cruelty redoundeth upon the King. And King Assuerus answered and said: Who is this, and of what power, that he should do these

things? And Esther said: It is this Aman that is our adversary and most wicked enemy. Aman hearing this, was forthwith astonished, not being able to bear the countenance of the King and of the Queen. But the King being angry rose up, and went from the place of the banquet unto the garden set with trees. Aman also rose up to entreat Esther the Queen for his life, for he understood that evil was prepared for him by the King. And when the King came back out of the garden set with trees, and entered into the place of the banquet, he found Aman was fallen upon the bed on which Esther lay, and he said: He will force the Queen also in my presence, in my own house. The word was not as yet gone out of the King's mouth, and immediately they covered his face. And Harbona, one of the eunuchs that stood waiting on the King, said: Behold the gibbet which he had prepared for Mardochai, who spoke for the King, standeth in Aman's house, being fifty cubits high. And the King said to him: Hang him on it. So Aman was hanged on the gibbet that he had prepared for Mardochai: and the King's wrath ceased" (Esther vii. 2-10).

The King granted the request the Queen had made on behalf of her people, and a whole nation was saved from certain destruction.

"If," says St. Alphonsus, "because he loved Esther, Assuerus, at her request, saved the Jews, how can God refuse to hear Mary, whom He loves with an infinite love, when she prays for miserable sinners

who invoke her intercession, and says to Him, 'If I have found favour in Thy sight, O King, O my King and my God, if I have found favour before Thee, give me my people for whom I intercede: if, O Lord, Thou lovest me, pardon those sinners for whom I supplicate.'" The Incarnate Son of God cannot reject the prayer of His immaculate Mother made on behalf of miserable sinners. "Holy Church," says St. Bernard, "calls Mary the Queen of Mercy because that by her prayers she opens the abyss of divine mercy to whom she wills, when she wills, and as she wills, so that no sinner, however enormous his sins may be, is lost if Mary protects him by her intercession." "The greater her exaltation and sanctity," says St. Gregory, "the greater is her sweetness and clemency towards sinners who wish to amend their lives and invoke her intercession." "She has," says St. Alphonsus, "a heart so benign and tender that she cannot bear to send away discontented anyone who asks her prayers. How great, then," continues the Saint, "should be our confidence in this queen whom we know to be so powerful before God, and at the same time to be so rich in mercy that there is no one living on this earth who does not partake of the clemency and favours of Mary." Mary is a loving Mother. No one can imagine the intense love she has for everyone of us poor sinners. The love we have for our neighbours is in proportion to the love we have for God. "This commandment we have from God, that he who loveth God loveth also his neighbour"

(1 St. John iv. 21). The saints being inflamed with the love of God, were ever ready to sacrifice their very lives for the salvation of men. "And who," says St. Alphonsus, "has loved God more than Mary has loved Him? She loved God in the first moment of her existence more than all the saints and angels have loved Him during the whole course of their lives. And," argues the Saint, "as among the celestial spirits, there is none that loves God as much as Mary, so there is no one, that loves us more than this our most loving Mother." "Mary also loves us," says St. Alphonsus, "because, in the person of St. John, we were recommended to her by her Divine Son Himself; she loves us because she knows that the price paid for our redemption was the Blood of that Divine Son. And if a mother," continues the Saint, "saw a slave ransomed by the pains, imprisonment, and labours of twenty years endured by a beloved son, how great, for that sole reason, should be her esteem for such a slave?" "And although this most loving Mother," says St. Bernard, "loves all men as her children, she recognises and loves in a special manner, those who love her tenderly." Let us, therefore, excite in our hearts the love of Mary. Let us love her, as she was loved by some of her faithful servants, who were so inflamed with her love that they were ready to make any sacrifice rather than offend her. Let us have recourse to Mary in our trials and tribulations. She will assist and obtain, on our behalf, from her Divine Son the grace that will enable

us to do the will of God in all things and to persevere until the end in His heavenly grace. "Go to the Mother of God," says St. Alphonsus; "show her the wounds which your sins have left upon your souls, and she will certainly pray to her Son to pardon you for the sake of the milk which she gave Him; and so great is the love of the Son for His Mother that He will certainly hear her. Justly does St. Bernard call her the ladder of sinners (*scala peccatorum*), because this merciful Queen, stretching out her hands to those who have miserably fallen, saves them from the precipice of sin, and enables them to ascend to God. Justly does St. Augustine speak of her as the hope of sinners, because it is through her, after Jesus, that we hope for the remission of all our sins." "Henceforth," says St. Bernard, "all generations shall call thee blessed, because thou hast brought forth life and glory to all generations." "Hence," adds St. Alphonsus, "all men shall call thee blessed, because through thy intercession thy servants obtain the life of grace and the glory of eternity." "Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed" (Luke i. 48).

"Mary is our life," says St. Alphonsus, "because she obtains for us the gift of perseverance. As it is true," says the Saint, "that all the graces that God dispenses unto men pass through the hands of Mary, it is also true that we cannot hope to obtain this grace but through her. We should, therefore, never cease to address our prayers to our Blessed Lady and implore

her protection." "When exposed to temptation," says St. Bernard, "to doubts of conscience, think on Mary, invoke the aid of one who is ever ready to assist you. Let not her powerful name depart from your heart; trust in it constantly; let it not depart from your mouth; invoke it continually. If you follow Mary, you shall not miss the way of salvation. As long as you recommend yourself to her, you shall not despair. If she support you, you shall not fall. If she protect you, you cannot fear that you shall be lost. If she guide you, you shall be saved without labour. If she undertake your defence, you shall certainly obtain the kingdom of bliss."

It is especially at the hour of death that we should implore her protection. It is then that we require the aid of one so powerful, the devil being more impetuous at our last hour to drag us down into the bottomless pit of perdition. If we only address our prayers to Mary, she will come to our assistance, and sweeten the last moments of our earthly pilgrimage. "Great indeed," says St. Alphonsus, "are the troubles and anguish of the dying, as well on account of the remorse caused by past sins, as on account of the horrors of approaching judgment, and the uncertainty of their eternal salvation. The devils will then arm themselves in a special manner, and labour with all their strength to gain the soul that passes to eternity; because they know that but little time remains to gain her, and that if they lose her then, they have lost her for ever. 'The devil hath come down unto you,

having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time' (Apoc. xii. 12). Hence, the devil that usually tempts the soul during life is not content to be alone in tempting her at death, but calls his associates to his aid. But," adds the Saint, "what fear can we have of our infernal enemies, if at the hour of death we have Mary with us? Father Suarez," continues St. Alphonsus, "in consequence of being tenderly devoted to Mary, died with so much joy that at death he said: 'I did not think death was so sweet (Non putabam tam dulce esse mori). I would never have imagined, had I not experienced it, that death could be so sweet.' You too," continues the Saint, "shall without doubt feel the same happiness and joy if at the moment of death you remember to have loved this good Mother who knows not to be unfaithful to her children who have been faithful in serving her by visits, by rosaries, by fasts, and more frequently by thanking her, by praising her, and more frequently by recommending themselves to her powerful prayers and intercession." We should, beloved brethren, put our hope in Mary and trust to obtain through her influence the graces we stand in need of. "The King of Heaven," says St. Alphonsus, "because He is infinite goodness, desires with an infinite desire to enrich us with His graces; but because confidence on our part is necessary He, in order to increase this confidence, has given us for our Mother and Advocate His own Mother, to whom He has given all power, to assist us, and therefore He wishes that after Him we place in her our hope of

salvation. They who place their hope in creatures, without dependence on God, as sinners do, who, in order to gain the favour of men, consent to offend God, are, as the prophet says, certainly accursed by God. But they who hope in Mary because, as Mother of God, she is able by praying in the name and through the merits of Christ, to obtain for them divine grace and eternal life, are blessed beyond measure, and please the heart of God, who wishes to see that great creature honoured, who has loved and honoured Him in this world, more than all men and angels." "O Lady," says St. Ephraim, addressing Mary, "do not cease to watch over us, and to place us under the mantle of thy protection, for, after God, we have no other hope but thee. For us there is no confidence but from thee; O pure Virgin, protect and guard us under the wings of thy clemency." "Every good, every help," says St. Alphonsus, "and every grace which men have received or shall receive from God till the end of the world have come and shall come to them through the intercession and through the medium of Mary. He who finds Mary," adds the Saint, "finds every good, finds all graces and virtues; for by her powerful prayers she obtains for him all that is to make him rich in divine grace. She tells us that with her are all the riches of God, all the divine mercies, that she may dispense them to her lovers." "With me are riches . . . that I may enrich them that love me" (Prov. viii. 18-21).

"In order," says St. Alphonsus, "to inspire sinners

with confidence in the protection of Mary, the glorious St. Bonaventure represents to us a sea agitated by the storm, in which sinners who have fallen from the divine grace, being tossed to and fro by remorse of conscience, by the terrors of divine justice, without light, and without a guide, are on the point of losing all hope, and giving themselves up to despair." With this thought, the saint, pointing to Mary, who is commonly called the Star of the Sea, appears to raise his voice, and to say unto them: "Poor lost sinners, do not despair; raise your eyes to the beautiful star; have confidence, for Mary will enable you to escape the fury of the tempest, and will conduct you to the haven of salvation." "There is not in the world a sinner so hateful to God," says St. Bridget, "that he will not, if he have recourse to Mary and invoke her aid, return to him, and recover divine grace." "The multitude of our sins," adds St. Alphonsus, "should not diminish our confidence of being heard by Mary. She is the Mother of mercy, and there is no room for mercy unless there is misery to be relieved. Hence, as a good mother knows not how to refuse to apply a remedy to a child afflicted with a loathsome disease, however troublesome and disgusting the application may be, so our good Mother knows not how to abandon us when we have recourse to her, however great the stench arising from the sins from which she may have to cure us."

At the marriage of Cana in Galilee she gave a signal proof of the tenderness of her maternal heart.

During the feast the young people were quite distressed at having run short of wine. The moment Mary noticed this state of things, she was deeply grieved, and asked her Son to provide them with some. Her request was immediately granted. A great miracle was performed on her behalf, her Divine Son having changed the water into the most delicious wine. If Jesus performed a miracle to gratify His Mother, who had asked for a temporal favour, can He refuse her when she asks for a spiritual one—for the salvation of sinners?

"I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel" (Gen. iii. 14). These words, beloved brethren, refer to Mary. In giving birth to Jesus, she gave birth to One Who conquered the devil, and destroyed his kingdom. "As in the ark was found the manna," says St. Alphonsus, "so in Mary we find Jesus, of Whom the manna was a figure: and by means of this ark we obtain a victory over the powers of earth and hell." The prayers we address to Mary are not in the least derogatory to the honour that is due to our Divine Lord. It is through His divine merits that her prayers are efficacious and agreeable to God. When we invoke Mary, and extol her for her virtues, when we honour her, it is Jesus that we honour, Who is the author of her heavenly perfections. "It is certain," says St. Bernard, "that the praises we lavish upon Mary redound to the glory and honour of her Son."

"It is very difficult," adds St. Alphonsus, "for us sinners to be saved without the protection of Mary, all the graces we stand in need of being granted through her protection. It is the will of God that we receive through Mary the graces we require for our salvation." "Such is the will of God," says St. Bernard, "Who wishes us to have all things through Mary." "We confess," says St. Alphonsus, "that God is the source of every good, and the absolute Lord and Master of every grace; and that Mary is a mere creature, who gratuitously receives from God every favour she obtains. But who can deny that it is very reasonable and proper to say that in order to exalt this creature, who had honoured and loved Him during her mortal life more than all creatures, God, having chosen Mary for the Mother of His Son, and of the Redeemer of the world, should wish that all graces that are granted to the souls that have been redeemed should pass through her hands and be dispensed through her." The saints and holy writers tell us that God after having given us Jesus Christ, wishes that all graces that have been dispensed, are dispensed, and shall be dispensed to the end of the world through the merits of our Divine Lord should be dispensed by the hand and through the prayers of Mary. Hence the necessity of addressing our prayers to Mary and invoking her protection.

"And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root.

And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him" (Isa. xi. 1, 2). "Whoever," says St. Bernard, explaining these words of the prophet Isaias, "desires to acquire the grace of the Holy Ghost, let him seek the flower in the rod—that is, Jesus in Mary; for through the rod we find the flower, and through the flower we find God." "O Mary!" exclaims St. Alphonsus, "since thou hast a heart so merciful that thou canst not behold the miserable without feeling compassion, and since thou hast at the same time such great power with God, to save all whom thou dost defend, do not refuse to plead the cause of us miserable sinners, who place in thee, after God, all our hopes. If our prayers do not move thee, let at least thy own loving heart move, let thy power move thee; for God has enriched thee with thy great power, that in proportion as thou art rich in power to assist us, thou mayest be merciful in thy will to aid us." "Mary," says St. Bernard, "offers to God the prayers of her servants; for as the Lord interceded for us with the Father, so she intercedes for us with her Son, and does not omit to negotiate with both the great business of our salvation, and to obtain for us the graces we require." "Full of compassion for our hearts," says St. Alphonsus, "full of mercy and benignity, she always seeks with maternal affection to assist and save us." Let us therefore have recourse to her, being firmly convinced that we shall always find her prepared to assist us. "There is no doubt," says St. Bernard, "but Jesus is the only mediator of justice

between man and God, Who by the efficacy of His divine merits, is able and willing, according to His promises, to obtain for us the pardon of our sins and divine grace; but because men recognise and fear in Jesus Christ the divine majesty which resides in Him as God, the Lord wished to appoint another advocate, to whom we could have recourse with less fear and more confidence." This advocate is Mary, than whom we cannot find among creatures an advocate more powerful before God or more merciful towards us. "Be comforted, then, ye faint-hearted," exclaims St. Thomas of Villanova; "take courage, O miserable sinners. This great Virgin, who is the Mother of your Judge and of your God, is the advocate of the human race; powerful to obtain what she wishes from God: most wise and perfectly acquainted with all the means of appeasing Him: receiving all, and never refusing to defend anyone." St. Alphonsus maintains that those who honour Mary cannot be lost. He speaks of those who, being faithful to Mary, desire sincerely to amend their lives. This the holy Doctor declares is the teaching of the saints on the matter.

"God recognises as His own," says St. Alphonsus, "all who bear the seal of a true servant of Mary, devotion to the Mother of God being a most certain means of obtaining eternal salvation." The Saint tells us that St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi saw in the midst of the sea a beautiful vessel in which all the clients of Mary were sheltered, and in which Mary herself performed

the office of pilot, and conducted them securely to port. From this she understood that they who live under the protection of Mary, in the midst of all the dangers of this life, are saved from the shipwreck of sin and perdition, because she guides them safely to the haven of paradise. Let us endeavour, then, to enter into this blessed vessel, to take refuge under the mantle of Mary, and there remain, secure of eternal bliss. "Mary is called by Holy Church," says Cardinal Hugo, "not only a prudent, but a most prudent, virgin, that we may understand that Mary is so full of grace and mercy, that she is able to provide for all without danger of being exhausted." "Mary," says St. Alphonsus, "was called an olive-tree, because as from the olive nothing comes forth but oil, the symbol of mercy, so from the hands of Mary nothing but graces and mercies flow. If we fly to this Mother to ask aid of her clemency, we cannot fear that she will refuse it to us, as the prudent virgins did to the foolish ones. Thou, then, O Blessed Virgin," exclaims the Saint, "dost dispense thy mercies with a liberal hand wheresoever thou seest our necessities. And this office of mercy thou shalt never cease to discharge." "And should our sins make us afraid of having recourse to God," writes Hugo of St. Victor, "because we have offended His infinite Majesty, we should not abstain from invoking the prayers of Mary, since in her we can find nothing that can excite terror. It is true that she is holy and immaculate, she is Queen of the world and mother of

God, but she is clothed with our flesh, she is, like ourselves, a child of Adam." "We can go with confidence to God," says a holy writer cited by St. Alphonsus, "and hope for all good from Him, now that the Son is our Mediator before the Father, and that our Mother is our advocate with the Son." Let us therefore never cease to address our prayers to our Blessed Lady; let us invoke her holy name. The devils, according to St. Thomas à Kempis, are so much afraid of the Queen of Heaven, that when her name is mentioned they fly, as from a burning fire, from the man who invokes it.

"And if," adds Thomas à Kempis, "you seek consolation, and true happiness in this world and eternal bliss in the next, in every affliction, have recourse to Mary, invoke Mary, honour Mary, recommend yourself to Mary, rejoice with Mary, seek Jesus with Mary, and desire to live and die with Jesus and Mary. If you do this, you shall always advance in the ways of the Lord; for Mary will gladly pray for you, and Jesus will certainly hear His Mother."

AMEN.

THE END.

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